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ROBERTO CARLOS

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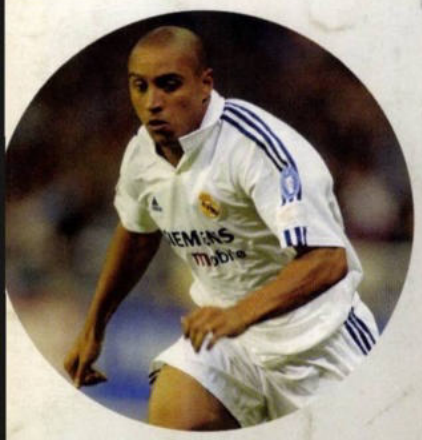

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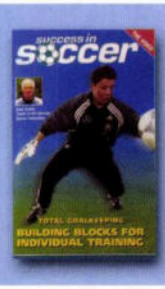

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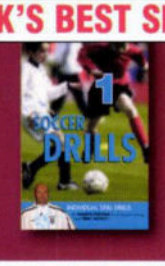

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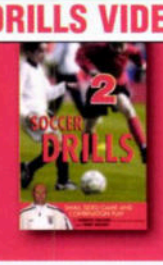

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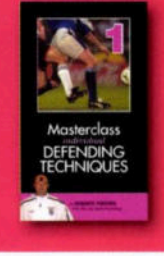

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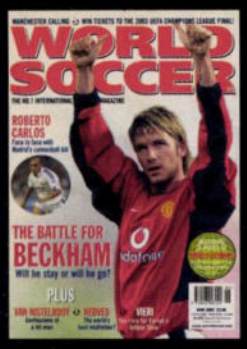

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June 2003

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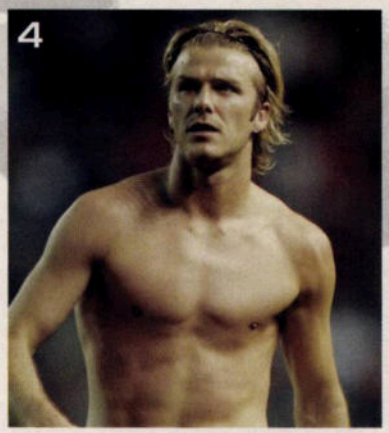

EVEN though Manchester United will play no further part in this season's Champions League (other than as gracious hosts of the Final, of course), David Beckham will continue to dominate the back (and front) pages over the coming months. The ins and outs of a possible move to Real Madrid will be debated and discussed, chewed up and churned over as the British obsession with celebrity shows no sign of abating.

It's hard to recall a story of such magnitude involving the world's two biggest football clubs, but Beckham's trials and tribulations should not allow us to be distracted from events on the pitch. By playing such mesmerising football in recent weeks, Madrid have confirmed to everybody why they are such strong favourites to win a 10th European Cup at Old Trafford on May 28.

Although Beckham is our cover star this month – for only the second time – it is our duty to report that there are, in fact, other footballers on this planet who are worthy of similar adulation. Like the eternally endearing Roberto Carlos (page 16), arguably the most successful player in the world today, and Pavel Nedved (page 18), whose performances for Juventus demand and deserve recognition.

We had promised to bring you a special feature on the world's richest clubs but unfortunately events conspired against us. Our exclusive survey will now appear next month, when we'll also have every essential detail from what promises to be an exciting finale to the season. **Gavin Hamilton, Editor** (gavin_hamilton@ipcmedia.com)

*** *SAVE MONEY ON WORLD SOCCER* SEE OUR SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER ON PAGE 28

विक्टोरिया

Adios, Manchester?

Gavin Hamilton examines the aftermath of Manchester United's Champions League defeat by Real Madrid

DAVID BECKHAM lingered longest on the Old Trafford pitch after Manchester United's aggregate defeat by Real Madrid in the Champions League quarter-finals.

He will have no doubt been reflecting on his role in a most remarkable European Cup tie. But he may also have been reaching the inevitable conclusion that his lifelong love affair with Manchester United is coming to a close.

It was, without doubt, an extraordinary match, even though the result was never in doubt after Ronaldo had scored the first goal of a devastating hat-trick early in the first half.

Despite the intensity of events on the pitch, eyes were trained on the United bench, where Beckham languished yet again, having also sat out League games against Liverpool, Newcastle and Arsenal in recent weeks.

For the first 62 minutes of the match, Beckham merely sat watching Real Madrid continue to play the mesmerising football they had produced in the first leg at home. Ronaldo had been subdued in the Bernabeu, when Zinedine Zidane, Raul and Luis Figo had been the stars. Without Raul, struck down by appendicitis, Ronaldo assumed the 'galactic' mantle, driving a stake through the heart of United's ambitions.

Beckham's response when he did appear as a substitute – two goals, one a wonderful free-kick – only compounded the sense of confusion over manager Alex Ferguson's starting 11.

For Ferguson to rest a key player in November or January would be understandable. But to drop one as iconic as Beckham for your team's key game of the season suggests a serious breakdown in relations between player and manager. Ferguson's relationship with Beckham has always been more complex than with any of his other charges. They are two very different personalities from two very different generations living two very different lifestyles. For all his admiration of Beckham the Footballer, Ferguson has always deeply mistrusted Beckham the Celebrity.

Relations deteriorated in February with the notorious dressing-room boot-kicking incident. The instincts of Beckham the Footballer would have been to keep the incident behind closed doors. But for Beckham the Celebrity it was too good an opportunity to miss. The midfielder bounced from the back pages to the front pages with the ease of a seasoned media campaigner.

After the aggregate defeat by Madrid, Ferguson sidestepped questions about Beckham, preferring to concentrate on the reasons for playing Ole Gunnar Solskjaer in his place. "It was based on the simple fact that Solskjaer's form has been fantastic in that position," Ferguson said. "He's impressed greatly. There are only so many times you can hit a guy over the head. When someone plays as well as he's been playing, what do you do? Leave him out because David Beckham's a great player, too?"

The preference for Solskjaer in place of Beckham was understandable given the Norwegian's prominence in the Premiership games against Liverpool and Newcastle, when United scored 10 goals, and the 2-2 draw with Arsenal which tipped the domestic title race in their favour. But Ferguson surprised everybody with his decision to start with Juan Veron – who had not played for seven weeks because of injury – ahead of Beckham.

The choice of Veron suggested one simple, inevitable conclusion: that Alex Ferguson now considers David Beckham to be expendable.

Inevitably, the stories linking the England captain with Real Madrid will now grow by the day. The two appear to be made for each other. Madrid are the only club who could take Beckham's career to a higher level. Similarly, Beckham is the only player who could extend Madrid's galactic appeal.

The arguments over Beckham's future have been well rehearsed. But any further discussion should focus on the question of not why Beckham would want to move to Madrid, nor why Madrid would want Beckham. But, rather, why would Beckham want to stay in Manchester?

There are no footballing challenges left for him at Old Trafford. In nine seasons, he has won every trophy bar the League Cup. Why stay with a team which could not match Madrid's class, managed by a man who no longer considers you to be first-choice? Footballing reasons lay at the heart of the decisions by Luis Figo, Zinedine Zidane and Ronaldo to join Madrid in summer 2000, 2001 and 2002 respectively. Figo joined a club on a high after winning its eighth European Cup; Zidane moved to Madrid having failed to land the trophy during five seasons at Juventus; and Ronaldo returned to Spain, scene of his happiest season (Barcelona 1996-97), after five frustrating years with Inter.

Right man, right time

Then there is the circumstantial evidence to consider: the admission by Madrid sports director Jorge Valdano that Beckham "seems to fit our project"; the English Sunday newspaper reports quoting an Old Trafford source that a £38million deal has already been agreed; and the revelation by United reserve keeper Ricardo to Spanish radio that Beckham has asked him about Madrid's schools.

Looming on the horizon this autumn is another Beckham autobiography (his third). He is reported to be receiving £2m from publishers HarperCollins, who will no doubt demand their pound of flesh. Previous efforts by Roy Keane and Jaap Stam, also published by HarperCollins, contained stories that caused acute

'The choice of Veron against Real Madrid suggests Ferguson now considers Beckham to be expendable'

Making his mark...substitute Beckham pulls a goal back against Real Madrid with a wonderful free-kick

Exit plans?...Beckham contemplates United's defeat at the hands of Real Madrid

embarrassment at Old Trafford. Given the sums of money involved, Beckham is unlikely to remain tight-lipped about his relationship with Ferguson, and the boot-kicking incident in particular.

The arguments against Beckham moving are twofold. Firstly, the denials by both United and Madrid of any deal. Secondly, that there would be no place for Beckham in Madrid's star-studded line-up.

Evaluating the denials

United, understandably, have been quick to dismiss the stories, as has Madrid president Florentino Perez. And yet 12 months ago, Perez was equally dismissive of stories linking Ronaldo with Madrid. Two years ago, it was the same with Zidane. Since winning the presidential election three years ago, Perez has quickly learned the black art of manipulating Madrid's media. The city's two sports dailies, *Marca* and *AS*, thrive on rumour and speculation; Perez has fed them scraps and let the stories develop organically. He then sits back and denies having ever had an interest in a particular player.

In footballing terms, it is indeed hard to argue the case for a regular place for Beckham in the Madrid starting line-up, especially after Figo outshone him in both quarter-final legs. Yet the Madrid press have tried, placing Beckham in central midfield, in place of the unfortunate Flavio Conceicao.

However, to view a possible Beckham move to Madrid simply in footballing terms is to miss the point. The Perez strategy has been to add one star name to

Rip it up and start again

A major rebuilding operation is likely at Old Trafford next season as Alex Ferguson looks to create another team, almost from scratch. New players are needed in almost every position. To bring in new blood, big-name players will almost certainly be sold.

GOAL

The poor positioning of Fabien Barthez for Ronaldo's first goal at Old Trafford only added to the criticism that the Frenchman has faced this season. Ferguson has never properly replaced Peter Schmeichel, but possible replacements for Barthez include David James (West Ham), Thomas Sorensen (Sunderland) and Pablo Cavallero (Celta Vigo).

New No 1?...James

DEFENCE

Rio Ferdinand has not justified his status as the world's most expensive defender and was at fault again against Madrid. Wes Brown still lacks confidence on the biggest stage, although John O'Shea has added to his growing reputation. United have been linked with Auxerre's Philippe Mexes and Julien Escude of Rennes. There might also be revived interest in Lilian Thuram, while a cheaper alternative could be to move Roy Keane back to central defence.

MIDFIELD

The declining mobility of Keane places a huge question mark over the United captain's future. A shock retirement is not out of the question, nor is a move to Celtic, but Keane is unlikely to remain a dominant force. The sales of David Beckham, Ryan Giggs and Juan Veron are all likely to be contemplated to raise cash for new players, though it is most probable only one of them will go. Damien Duff (Blackburn) would be the most likely replacement for Giggs were he to be sold to one of his many Italian admirers. River

the Madrid roster every year, in the same manner as that of Santiago Bernabeu in the 1950s. The only footballer who could claim that star status at the moment is David Beckham, whose iconic position places him on a par with Ronaldo as the world's most marketable footballer.

Madrid may have demonstrated over two legs that they are on another footballing planet to the rest of the Champions League quarter-finalists, but it is United who have blazed a trail in marketing and merchandising over the past decade. They are the role model that all other clubs – including Madrid – are trying to copy.

Most marketable asset

This summer, United will tour the USA. Not for altruistic reasons, you understand. Chief executive Peter Kenyon, as a former boss of Umbro, knows full well that the US is the largest overseas market for replica shirts. United want to be market leaders in merchandise there, just as they are in the UK.

Any decision on a possible sale of Beckham will ultimately rest with the United PLC board, who answer to shareholders, not the fans. For the board and the shareholders, Beckham remains a hugely valuable commercial asset.

So the biggest battle for Beckham may not be between United and Madrid, but between Alex Ferguson and the PLC board.

The defeat by Madrid exposed inadequacies throughout the spine of the United side – in goal, defence and midfield. Extensive rebuilding work is inevitable this summer, but Kenyon has already made it clear that new purchases will have to be paid for by player sales. The sale of Beckham to Madrid would release upwards of £40m for Ferguson to spend on new players.

Money is the only commodity that talks in the modern game, but will Beckham walk?

Prospective buy...Duff

Plate's young starlet Andres D'Alessandro has long been linked with United, while if West Ham are relegated, Ferguson could pursue Joe Cole, for whom he has a long-standing admiration. Another option is Rafael Van der Vaart of Ajax.

ATTACK

Ruud Van Nistelrooy is one of the few United players to have emerged from this season with his reputation enhanced, but he remains desperately short on strike partners. United may cut their losses and dispense with Diego Forlan, bringing in someone like Craig Bellamy (Newcastle) to give the attack more bite. Alternatives could include Chelsea's Eidur Gudjohnsen, Djibril Cisse of Auxerre or Leeds pair Alan Smith and Harry Kewell.

We've been here before...

The reign of Florentino Perez as president of Real Madrid has been dominated by the high-profile signings of three of the world's leading players. All three deals have been achieved against the odds, with clubs who initially refused to sell their star asset.

Signed...Figo joins, flanked by Perez (left) and Alfredo Di Stefano

2000 – LUIS FIGO

July 6
Florentino Perez, up until now an outsider in the Real Madrid presidential election, reveals an agreement to sign Figo if he is elected president.

July 8
Figo leaves for a holiday on the Algarve, denying having made an agreement with Perez.

July 9
Perez confirms his offer that if he fails to sign Figo, he will pay the membership fees of all *socios*.

July 17
Perez is elected as president, beating incumbent Lorenzo Sanz.

July 24
Figo is presented as a Madrid player after the club pay the £37m escape clause in his Barcelona contract. Figo becomes the world's most expensive footballer.

2001 – ZINEDINE ZIDANE

Late April
The first rumours emerge about a possible move to Madrid.

June 8
Perez confirms his interest. "We'll do all we can to sign Zidane."

June 22
Zidane's agent, Alain Miglaccio, tells *Marca*: "The decision has been taken. I cannot understand Juventus' interest in keeping Zidane."

June 23
Juve break off relations with Madrid and say Zidane is not for sale.

June 24
Zidane declares in *La Repubblica* that "my future lies in Madrid".

June 28
Juventus general manager Luciano Moggi insists "whatever is said in Spain doesn't affect us in the slightest. Zidane is not going."

July 4
Moggi acknowledges that Zidane is Madrid-bound. "Why is Zidane leaving Juventus? Because he has expressed his desire to leave, and because Florentino Perez was absolutely determined to take him to Madrid."

July 5
Perez and Valdano close the deal for a world record £47.2m.

Sealed...£47.2m Zidane

2002 – RONALDO

Late April
The first rumours emerge about a possible move to Madrid.

July 2
Inter announce plans to offer World Cup Final hero Ronaldo a new contract. The forward, back in Brazil, says Roberto Carlos has said he would be welcome in Madrid. Inter president Massimo Moratti says: "Ronaldo is worth £65m, but that's academic because we're not selling."

July 15
Perez dampens down expectations, telling *Marca*: "We're not in a spending mood. If we do not sell players, we cannot buy. No one at Real Madrid has made any moves towards signing Ronaldo."

Delivered...World Cup hero Ronaldo

August 3
Perez finally admits his interest in the Brazilian.

August 7
Inter announce that Ronaldo is not for sale.

August 23
A meeting between Perez and Moratti ends without agreement.

September 1
In Monaco, the deal to transfer Ronaldo to Madrid for £30m is finally completed.

The month in pictures

● 26/03/03...Frank Neubarth is sacked as coach of Bundesliga side Schalke

● 27/03/03...Injury rules out Betis's Denilson for the rest of the season

● 29/03/03...In the Euro 2004 qualifiers, a David Beckham free-kick helps England to a 2-0 win over Liechtenstein

● 29/03/03...Brazil are beaten 2-1 by Portugal in a friendly in Oporto

Q&A: Ruud Van Nistelrooy

The Manchester United and Holland striker talks to Klaas-Jan Droppert

Working on being the best...Van Nistelrooy

WORLD SOCCER: Why is your partnership with Patrick Kluivert in the Dutch national team not as perfect as everyone was expecting?
RUUD VAN NISTELROOY: If it was ever as good as everybody was expecting that would mean it would be extremely good. That's what I'm hoping for, like everybody else. I agree that there is potential, but so far we've only seen it in fits and starts. It should always be there.

But Kluivert-Van Nistelrooy is a super partnership.
Maybe. But when are you called a super partnership? If both players are scoring regularly? I have thought about it and can't remember any super partnerships since Andy Cole and Dwight Yorke at Manchester United. Can you? The principal thing is that both aren't doing the same things but supply each other and make each other better. At least, that's the way I see it.

But aren't you and Kluivert similar strikers?
If you compare Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink, Roy Makaay and myself with him it's clear that Kluivert is a different type of player. He is more than a striker. Kluivert can play between the opponents' midfield and defence and is doing that fantastically at Barcelona. He is controlling the game in one of the most difficult positions on the pitch.

Still, you both are covering a lot of ground.
Yes, but that's part of our game. We talk a lot about it. I know for sure that one day [our partnership] is going to happen. The only question is when. The feeling is there. And if it does happen, nobody can stop us.

Don't you sometimes try too hard to make it happen?
That's true. I'm reading what the papers are saying about us and know what the people are expecting as well. You want to show the world that it is possible. But exaggerating by making 85 one-two combinations, like we did in a friendly match, just to show that we can play together isn't working either. This co-operation should be happening automatically.

Is it frustrating that you're successful at the highest level with Manchester United but not at the same level with the national team?
Not frustrating, because I'm not playing badly in the national team. But people know what I'm doing with United every week and expect me to do the same things in the national team. I've got the same expectations, because it is possible.

What is the difference between playing at Manchester United and in the national team?
It's completely different. With United I'm chasing the ball in every corner, and that gives me a marvellous feeling. I'm constantly running, dragging. Every time I see a gap I'm filling it. I want to be there. The national team play a different type of football. The ball goes from left-back to central defender, then to the right midfielder. He passes the ball to left flank etc. It's fantastic to play in such a team but for me that means I have to think about what will happen next all the time and anticipate the direction of the ball.

Can't you play for Holland the way you are used to with United?
I'm allowed to, but in the national team they are not playing balls into the channels. So I have to be patient, which I can be. Stay up front, create space for my team-mates and keep two opponents busy.

But with United your contribution is bigger. You are deciding matches.
Maybe so, but I get my chances in the national team as well. I've talked about it with [national coach] Dick Advocaat. The big difference is that at a club you can practise every day, and with the national team you only play once a month. Every time the Dutch squad come together it is getting better and better. But it takes time. The extra that makes the difference for a striker isn't there yet. Although I'm not playing badly, my own expectations are much higher. I want to be among the best in the team. There is only one way to do so: by being decisive, being important and being good.

Kluivert going to Manchester United might help you reach that goal.
Yes, that may be the solution!

● 29/03/03...Republic of Ireland win 2-1 in Georgia in their Euro qualifier

● 29/03/03...Wales keep their 100 per cent record with a 4-0 victory over Azerbaijan in Cardiff

● 29/03/03...Holland are held to a 1-1 draw at home by the Czech Republic

It's La Liga v Serie A in the fight to win Europe's top goalscorer award

Catch-up...Makaay

Serie A leader...Vieri

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GOLDEN SHOE

ESM GOLDEN SHOE STANDINGS AT 22.04.03

pos	name	team	goals	factor	pts
1	Roy Makaay	Deportivo La Coruna (Spa)	24	2	48
	Christian Vieri	Internazionale (Ita)	24	2	48
3	James Beattie	Southampton (Eng)	22	2	44
	Thierry Henry	Arsenal (Eng)	22	2	44
5	Mateja Kezman	PSV Eindhoven (Hol)	28	1.5	42
6	Pauleta	Bordeaux (Fra)	20	2	40
	Ruud Van Nistelrooy	Manchester United (Eng)	20	2	40
8	Henrik Larsson	Celtic (Sco)	26	1.5	39
9	Shabani Nonda	Monaco (Fra)	19	2	38
10	Andrei Krolov	Tallina VMK (Est)	37	1	37
11	Arman Karamian	Pyunik (Arm)	36	1	36
	Pierre Van Hooijdonk	Feyenoord (Hol)	24	1.5	36
13	Darko Kovacevic	Real Sociedad (Spa)	17	2	34
	Alan Shearer	Newcastle (Eng)	17	2	34
15	Ailton	Werder Bremen (Ger)	16	2	32
	Nihat Kahveci	Real Sociedad (Spa)	16	2	32
	Ronaldo	Real Madrid (Spa)	16	2	32
18	Wesley Sonck	Genk (Blg)	21	1.5	31.5
19	Thomas Christiansen	Bochum (Ger)	15	2	30
	Giovane Elber	Bayern Munich (Ger)	15	2	30
	Filippo Inzaghi	Milan (Ita)	15	2	30
	Paul Kpaka	Germinal Beerschot (Blg)	20	1.5	30
	Michael Owen	Liverpool (Eng)	15	2	30
	Maciej Zurawski	Wisla Krakow (Pol)	20	1.5	30

For the latest standings, updated weekly, visit www.worldsoccer.com

Makaay and Vieri locked in battle

ROY MAKAAY of Deportivo La Coruna and Internazionale's Christian Vieri were the leading contenders to win the 2003 ESM Golden Shoe as the major European League seasons entered their final weeks.

Dutchman Makaay caught up with Serie A top scorer Vieri after scoring his 23rd and 24th goals of the Spanish League season in Depor's 3-1 win over Sevilla.

The ESM Golden Shoe is awarded by ESM (European Sports Magazines) to the player who scores the highest number of points based on their goalscoring performances over the season. Goal tallies are multiplied by a factor of 1, 1.5 or 2, depending on the strength of their domestic league.

The winner will receive his award at the UEFA gala in Monte Carlo in August.

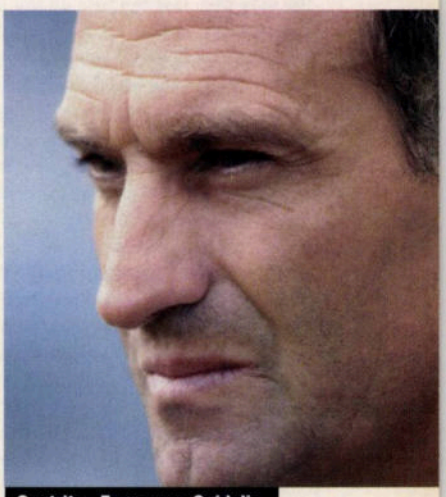
Notes & quotes

"For the love of Milan, I'm willing to earn less."

Club captain Paolo Maldini takes a 30 per cent pay cut.

"If we played so badly at the last World Cup, it was because we played in the Confederations Cup in 2001. We lost out on some rest."

France and Manchester United defender Mickael Silvestre joins the growing anti-Confederations Cup lobby.



Contrite...Francesco Guidolin

"I apologise. I was badly brought up."

Bologna coach Francesco Guidolin apologises after swearing at supporters who were whistling one of his substitutions during a Serie A match with Juventus.

"My idea is to have just one European club competition with 256 clubs playing in a knockout system."

Michel Platini may have more than a few problems getting this one to fly.

The month in pictures

● 03/04/03...England may face UEFA punishment after 90 English fans are arrested outside Sunderland's Stadium of Light before the Euro 2004 qualifier against Turkey

● 03/04/03...Stefan Effenberg walks out on Wolfsburg

● 07/04/03...Alex Ferguson is charged by UEFA after making inflammatory comments

● 08/04/03...Zinedine Zidane star as Real Madrid beat Man Utd 3-

Q&A: Javier Zanetti

Inter's Argentinian captain talks to Dominique Antognoni

WORLD SOCCER: Are Inter still haunted by the way they lost the title on the last day of last season?
JAVIER ZANETTI: When you lose an important game, you become afraid that you're never going to win again. But when you win a game, that seems to help you to win more. When we played our Champions League first-round match against Sporting Lisbon at San Siro, you could sense in the air the fear of failure. But we got that out of our system and we transformed the fear into a positive form of aggression. That's the mood in which we are approaching the final stages of the Champions League – we want to get that title back. I was affected by the last-day loss to Lazio, but you just have to look yourself in the mirror and say to yourself: "You gave your all and did your best, but sometimes in life, things don't go as planned; now's the time to look to the future."

How has the Champions League affected the Italian League – after all, Inter, Juve and Milan reached the quarter-finals?
At this stage I don't think there's any question of players getting over-tired. I've looked at the calendar and the championship finishes on May 25, and we'll be playing at home against Perugia. The Champions League Final is three days after that, and I've asked myself whether – if we win Serie A – we might be too euphoric to play at our best. But if we don't win it, the Final will be an immediate chance for us to redeem ourselves, and we will have all the necessary hunger inside us to win the Champions League.

There is talk of a contract for life for you at Inter.
Talks are under way, and I may be in a position to sign something soon. I hope I've been able to demonstrate over recent years just how much I love Inter and the fans.

A couple of years ago, that wasn't the case.
But that's how football is – and if Real Madrid had come in with a new offer for me...

Instead, you stayed put, and you're surrounded at Inter by a group of great Argentinian players – perhaps too many, some say.
I've heard something of the kind – there's talk about there being a 'clan' of us Argentinians. How daft. It's a great plus point for Inter that we are all here together. With the exception of Guly [Andres Guglielminpietro], all the rest of us know each other of old and have played alongside each other in the national squad for a long time. Besides, Argentinians have a greater desire to win than any other nation.

Your room-mate now is Gabriel Batistuta – the latest arrival. Is he in a bad way after being turned on by some sections of the Inter fans?
In a bad way, no – perplexed, certainly. But that's the nature of football – when things are going badly people look for a scapegoat. That's what happened to Bati – perhaps because he has so much personality and charisma. But it's clear that the whistling was aimed at the entire squad, not just at him.

Recently, [Inter president] Massimo Moratti said he considered Christian Vieri to be the linchpin of the team. Did you not feel a little let down by such a comment?
Not in the least. Moratti and I are beyond that sort of thing. He said that as a way of getting a message across to Bobo [Vieri]. I've no doubts about how much Moratti values me and about the strength of our working relationship.

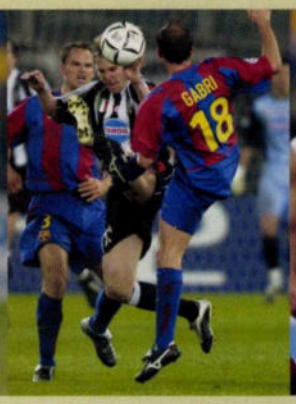
What will you do at the end of your career?
Stay in Italy, in the country that made me a man and has made me wealthy, famous, and – let's hope – always a winner.

Inter stalwart...Zanetti is considering staying for life

Tell us about PUPI – the Foundation for an Integrated Youth – which you support and fund.
PUPI was set up to promote action on underprivileged children – to help with food, healthcare and education. It's often said that youngsters growing up in high-risk social conditions find it hard to change their environment and to take charge of their own destiny. We feel that not to be the case, and PUPI is setting up programmes structured to the needs of the poorest families and communities. Our aim is to help those in need, but also to empower them to change their own lives.

Why did you get involved?
I had a tough childhood, and while I no longer live in Argentina, I'm in touch with the financial crisis there, and I know the effect it is having on the very poorest children. I have always thought that we all have a duty of care to each other in society. It's the same with football: individuals have to take on a particular task in order to help the whole team.

● 09/04/03...Internazionale beat Valencia 1-0 in Milan



● 09/04/03... Juventus and Barcelona draw 1-1 in Turin

● 12/04/03...Bayern Munich suffer their first home League defeat of the season, 1-0 to Werder Bremen

Talent Scout Turkey

Nick Bidwell selects the 10 most promising young Turks

TUNCAY SANLI

(16.01.82, Fenerbahce)
Brilliant attacking midfielder or forward and a prolific scorer for Turkey's Under-21s. Previously with Sakaryaspor, he is a devastating package of pace, skill, awareness and explosive finishing. A regular slot in the senior national team is only a matter of time.

SUAT USTA

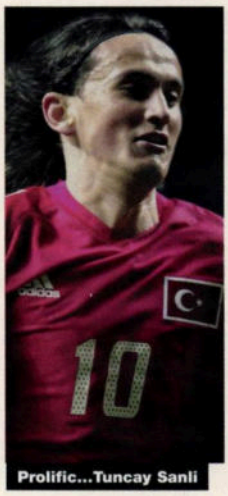
(03.08.81, Galatasaray)
Classy central defender whose poise, organisational ability and strength in the tackle make him a fine prospect. Born in Turkey (Samsun) but learnt his football in Holland with MVV and PSV before returning home last January to play for Galatasaray, where he has been earning rave reviews of late.

KEMAL ASLAN

(24.10.81, Fenerbahce)
A midfielder of mesmerising ball-skills who can play wide on the left but is much more effective when pulling the strings centrally. Both a creator and goalscorer, though lacks consistency. Joined Fenerbahce from Gaziantepspor mid-way through this season.

OKAN KOC

(22.01.82, Genclerbirligi)
An exciting right-sided midfielder with a flair for goals, he is on the wanted list of all the Big Three Istanbul clubs. A number of Italian outfits are watching him intently too. Ex-Dardanelspor and often compared to Real Sociedad rising star Nihat Kahveci.



Prolific...Tuncay Sanli

IBRAHIM AKIN

(01.04.84, Altay)
A regular scorer for Turkey's Under-19s, he is an outstanding leader of the line, able to hold the ball up well, full of good movement and boasting razor-sharp reactions in the box. Making steady progress with Izmir club Altay.

VOLKAN DEMIREL

(27.10.81, Fenerbahce)
Should Rustu finally be enticed away overseas, Fener have an outstanding ready-made replacement in the current Turkish Under-21 keeper. Sound positional skills, brave and acrobatic.

IBRAHIM YAVUZ

(10.11.82, Adanaspor)
Polished young full-back who has proved one of his club's few positive notes this term with his tenacious tackling, covering and assured support play. Able to play on either flank.

ASEMIH SENTURK

(29.04.83, Fenerbahce)
Vibrant young forward who has been performing so impressively lately that he has been preferred to his club's highly experienced Russian international import Vladimir Beschastnykh. The scorer of two goals on his League debut this season, he is a constant threat with his pace and quick feet.

Mesmerising...Kemal Aslan

ALI SEN KANDIL

(23.08.82, Trabzonspor)
Tactically switched-on left-sided midfielder who provides excellent defensive cover and is no slouch going forward either. He always uses the ball thoughtfully and puts in his share of good crosses as well. A fine all-rounder.

SABRI SARIOGLU

(26.07.84, Galatasaray)
Although the midfielder has featured little in the Galatasaray first team, coach Fatih Terim rates him as one to watch for the future, and that should be testimony enough. A star of Turkey's Under-19s, he is a busy, enthusiastic player and an excellent passer, both long and short.

Notes & quotes

"A club's results should be seen on the pitch, not in their share price."

FIFA president Sepp Blatter rails against clubs floating on the stock market.

"At times, we haven't played beautiful football but we have been terribly efficient."

Sparta Prague's Karel Poborsky praises the functional qualities of the Czech League leaders.

'Superficial'...Oliver Kahn

"Most footballers are superficial people, they live in a single-dimension world governed by money. They may develop healthy bodies but their minds do not develop at all."

Silvia Matthaus, former wife of Lothar Matthaus, commenting on revelations about Oliver Kahn's domestic problems.

"If I didn't want any stress, I would be coach of Guam."

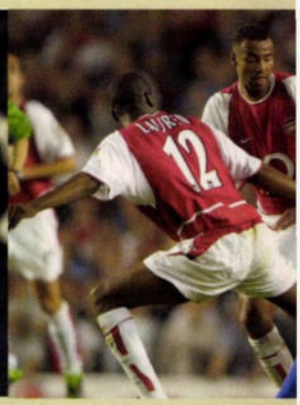
Zico denies that he is feeling the pressure as coach of Japan.

The month in pictures

● 13/04/03...The Spanish title race gets interesting again after Real Madrid go down 4-2 to Real Sociedad in San Sebastian

● 13/04/03...Roma's good spell continues as they beat Parma 2-1

● 15/04/03...Leverkusen reject coach Thomas Horster's offer to resign



● 16/04/03...The 'title decider' between Arsenal and Man Utd ends in a 2-2 draw

GLOBAL VIEW

Paul Gardner

A different type of development down in Dallas

YOU hear a lot about 'youth development' these days. It's almost as though they are two magic words: say them – youth development – and you've solved most of football's problems.

In case you missed the connection: it's becoming too expensive to buy top players, so the clubs must develop their own youngsters. A matter of money, of course, and by general agreement that's where the sport's current problems lie.

Evidently, we've moved on. Not that long ago there was a slightly different panacea, and we needed only one magic word: coaching. Get the coaching right and an exciting flow of skilful kids would soon start entering the sport.

Something went awry with that theory. In the fractious and multi-opinioned world of football, it proved mighty difficult to establish a clear line between good and bad coaching.

So we have youth development instead. A much more all-embracing term, one that can – and often does – take in a boy's educational and social growth as well as his football prowess. A more serious approach, if you like, as we enter the world of the football academies. Well-financed, well-organised, well-equipped, professionally-staffed training centres for kids as young as 10.

Again, the aim is a steady flow of skilful players; maybe it's too early for any worldwide verdict, but I, for one, am not holding my breath.

What I find so questionable about this highly systematic approach is that it leaves out – indeed, tends to rather frown on – one crucial aspect of youth development. An aspect that is absolutely essential to the development of soccer talent.

A boy growing up must be allowed to be, encouraged to be...boyish. Two vital parts of that boyishness are fun and mischief. When having fun by playing a sport becomes training for the serious business of making a living, you can be sure that a major attitude change is demanded.

Academies don't even *sound* like anyone's having fun. But that's what we talk about these days when we talk about youth development.

For a week recently I immersed myself in a rather different, non-academy world, of player development. The Dallas Cup, now in its 24th year, is an Easter Week tradition. An unlikely place for a top youth tournament, but – with the help of 1,200 local volunteers – it works beautifully.

Volunteers. Now there's a non-academy word, if you like. Sounds almost amateurish, but it's not. It's immensely refreshing and it brings a spirit of enjoyment that permeates the tournament. Some 150 teams from around the world play football that varies from very good to pretty awful.

> **'Does youth development get too serious, too structured, too early? Will academies take the fun out of the game?'**

Sure, the pro teams are there – under-14s from Manchester United, under-19s from Benfica, under-17s from Guadalajara – but the vast majority of the players are with youth club teams.

I suppose that ought to make them inferior to the academies, but no vast difference was noticeable, certainly not at the younger age levels.

What did impress was the amazing variety in the coaching and the playing styles, and in the players themselves. At a tournament like this, where games are played on 10 adjacent fields, it is possible to savour this variety in a matter of minutes, merely by strolling from one pitch to the next.

Twelve-year-olds trying to cope with full-size goals; 14-year-olds attempting to make headway against a merciless wind; kids sitting around in circles listening – or more likely, it seemed, not listening – to their coaches; parents waving club flags and yelling noisy encouragement along with good and awful advice; Mexican players trying to make sense of an English referee's decisions, and English lads having a similar problem with a Latin American referee; over here a group of triumphant teenagers racing around, all smiles, waving their shirts in the air; over there a quiet bunch of little tykes with tears in their eyes...and, at least one per field it seemed, well-behaved dogs lying in the sun, usually with their backs to the game.

You see all this, you feel all of this, you take it all in, you love every minute of it...and you begin to wonder whether an academy system makes any sense at all. Is it possible for a system, any system, to make sense and form out of this bubbling chaos? And if order is imposed, how much of the sheer *spirit* of the boyish world is lost?

Does youth development get too serious, too structured, too early? Will it inevitably lead to the soulless 'perfection' of robotic players? Will the academies take the fun out of the game?

Will there ever be, at an academy, a scene like this, one that had everyone falling about on the sidelines?

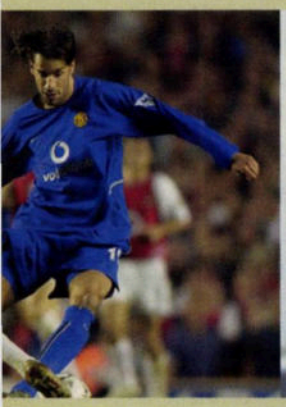
Panicking coach: "Get back, Jason! JASON! Get back!"

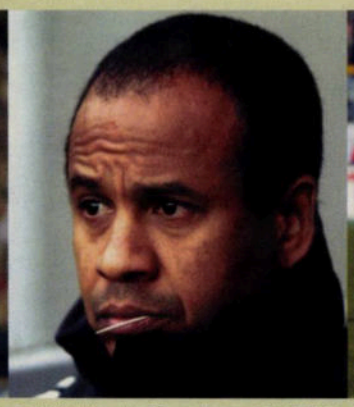
A midget player with much-too-large baggy shorts, responds, racing back towards his own goal.

Coach, now waving frantically: "No, no, not you! JASON! Get back, dammit!"

Squeaky reply from baggy shorts: "I AM Jason..."

Coach, glaring at his clipboard: "Oh shit..."





● 16/04/03...Jean Tigana is sacked as manager of Fulham

● 17/04/03...Jaap Stam announces his intention to leave Lazio in the summer following a row over money

● 19/04/03...Rangers reach the Scottish Cup Final after beating Motherwell 4-3 in a thrilling match

Keir Radnedge

MEDIAWATCH

News and views from the world's press

Maradona and the name game

ITALY: "Giuseppe Sarnataro, a Naples city councillor, has obtained unanimous agreement from his colleagues to try to rename after Diego Maradona the stadium we have always known as Fuorigrotta (because of the suburb) or San Paolo (after Saint Paul, who is supposed to have landed at Pozzuoli on his last journey to Rome).

"Once upon a time our football stadia in Italy were communal in both name (Comunale) and fact. This was respected in the smallest details: you could leave a half-eaten sandwich on the terraces one Sunday and find it still there (somewhat less edible) two weeks later.

"Then it became fashionable to name stadia after the great and the good of sport – not only footballers such as Luigi Ferraris (Genoa) or Giuseppe Meazza (Milan) but also motorcyclists such as Libero Liberati (Terni). At Bergamo they wanted to include everyone, hence the Stadio Azzurri d'Italia.

"Maradona is one of those people who creates controversy without even trying. Never mind the name. To dedicate the stadium to that golden age when Napoli won Serie A twice, the Coppa Italia once, the Supercoppa once and the UEFA Cup also once is a reasonable idea.

"However, legally it's not so simple. Local bylaws permit naming a public space after a person only when they have been dead for at least 10 years. In that case we would miss all the fun and games of Maradona being involved in the ceremonials, which would, of course, demand the presence of as many security officers as fans.

"If the Stadio Maradona proposal somehow goes ahead, though, why stop there? The council could name the Beverello harbour after the swimmer Davide Rummolo, the central station after the boxer Patrizio Oliva, the Capodichino airport after tennis player Rita Grande.

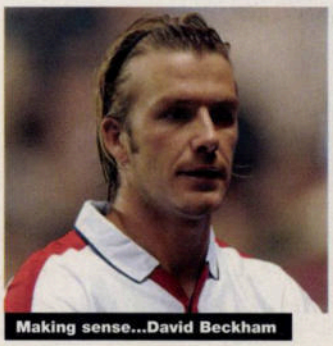
"As for Vesuvius, we're open to nominations..."

– MARCO PASTONESI in *Gazzetta dello Sport*

Beckham, the honourable captain

ENGLAND: "Someone at the FA is said to be 'furious' at David Beckham for daring to suggest that it might teach the hooligans a lesson if England's next match were played behind closed doors. What are we coming to when the players are more honourable, statesman-like, perceptive and less self-seeking than the administrators of our national game? Not for nothing is Beckham England's captain. When his legs eventually give out, perhaps he should take over at the FA. He makes more sense than the men in charge at the moment."

– JEFF POWELL in the *Daily Mail*



Making sense...David Beckham

Raul is the Real thing

SPAIN: "Accuse me of heresy if you like but, in my opinion, Raul Gonzalez Blanco is the best Spanish-born footballer of all time.

"This is not a judgment made in the immediate aftermath of his two goals against Manchester United in the Champions League or any form of disrespect to the likes of Luis Suarez, Paco Gento, Ricardo Zamora etc.

"It is a simple analysis of the progress of a model footballer who is barely halfway through his career and yet is already a legend.

"Three Champions Leagues, two World Club Cups, one European Supercup, three Spanish Leagues, two Spanish Supercups, two top marksmen awards and a string of other records for both his club (Real Madrid) and country (Spain) add up to a staggering sum of achievement for a player who is still only 25."

– JUAN JOSE DIAZ, deputy editor, in *Marca*

Eurosport behind the times

Memo to British Eurosport: Please don't insult your viewers.

In *The Observer* on Sunday, April 13, was a large Eurosport advert proclaiming: "Inter v AC Milan LIVE!...Join James Richardson and Roberto Di Matteo this Sunday for a Milan derby extravaganza!"

Riveting, of course – unless you happened to be a follower of Italian football. In that case, you would have known that the derby had been played the previous (Saturday) evening.

Best ever?...Raul

Waiting for FIFA's writ

On March 18, FIFA announced it was suing the *Daily Mail* and reporter Andrew Jennings. The *Mail* is still awaiting the writ.

WORLD SOCCER/CNN TEAM OF THE MONTH POLL

1	Manchester Utd
2	Real Madrid
3	Juventus
4	Internazionale
5	FC Porto
6	Milan
7	Arsenal
8	Real Sociedad
9	Boca Juniors
10	Barcelona

SUPERNOVA

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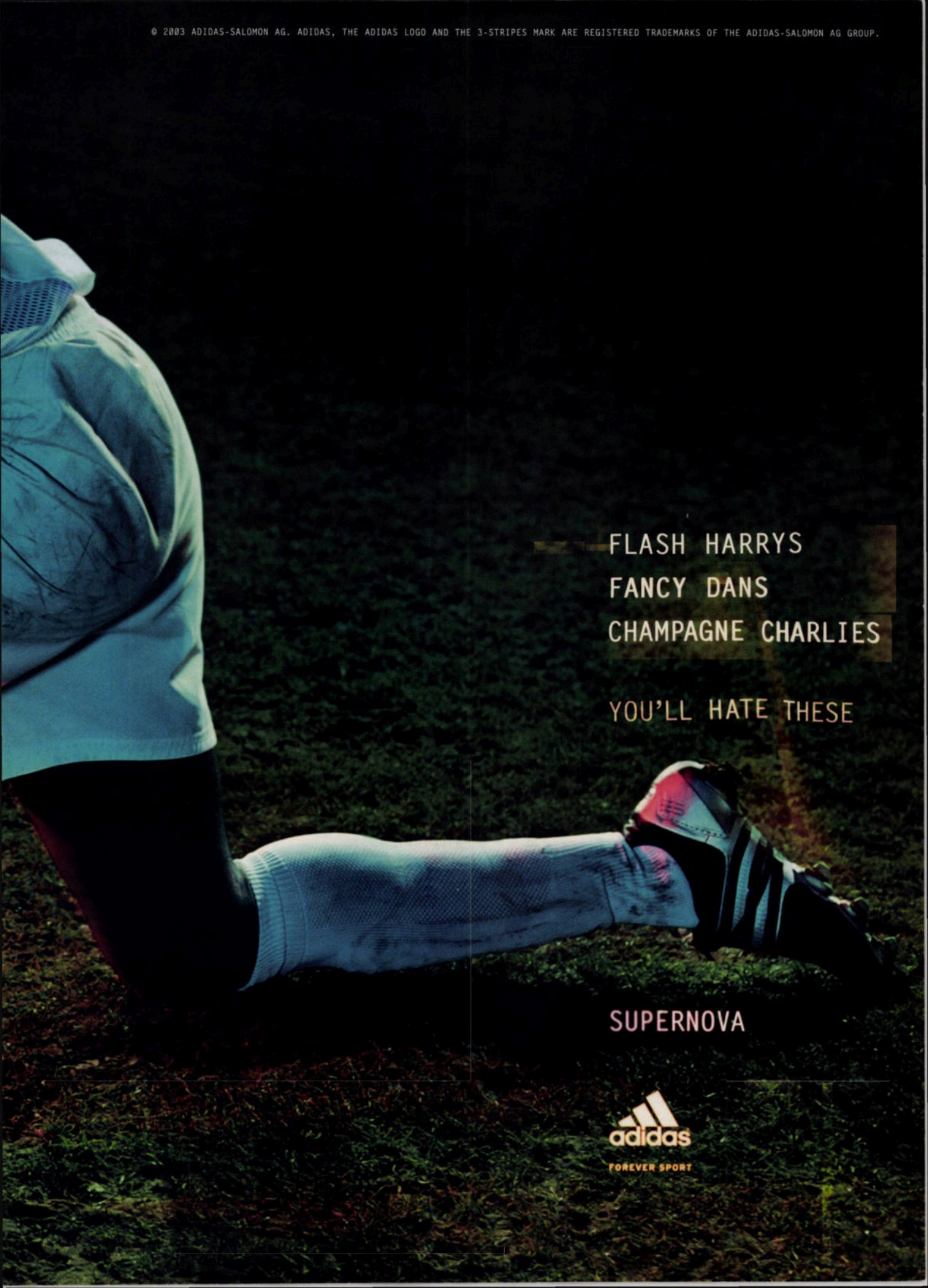


The history maker

Real Madrid's trophy-laden Brazilian talks to Sid Lowe

WORLD SOCCER: Real Madrid's sensational display against Manchester United at the Bernabeu left the world's media awe-struck. But the Madrid press has been calling you 'galactic' for months.
ROBERTO CARLOS [rolls his eyes]: That nickname doesn't go down well here. In fact, it really annoys us, because we're not 'galactic' at all. We're just people who've won lots of things playing football, both with other clubs and with our national teams, as well as here. But *galacticos*? Bah!

But you did, once again, get the better of United's superstar, David Beckham.
I didn't beat Beckham; it's not about that. What I tried to do – as always – was stop the player I had in front of me. Among United's greatest weapons are Beckham's long balls and precise passes, so my aim was to get really close to him whenever he had possession. And push him back, make it so he had to mark me as much as I had to mark him.

That tie was marked by the rumours linking Beckham to Madrid. What do you think of him?
That he's one of the best there is.

And a friend of yours?
No! That's been said in the press, but I don't know where it came from. I like David Beckham, I respect him and I admire him, but my friend? My dad is my friend!

Would Beckham have a place at Madrid?
Great players always have a place in any team. The problem is when you talk about a player possibly coming, the media says he will come. The players aren't the ones who do the signing, and – as our president said – talking about Beckham coming to Madrid is a lack of respect for his current team.

And towards those Madrid players that he could potentially replace. Figo, maybe Flavio…
Well, yes. Of course people are going to get a bit annoyed; it's impossible for them not to be aware of stories like this. But Figo knows very well what he represents here. And I don't think he was especially motivated against Manchester United because of Beckham; that's the way he plays and he's had an exceptional season – it's a privilege to have him here. Then there's Flavio, McManaman…they're great footballers for Madrid.

If Beckham was to come it wouldn't be easy. After all, the fans still whistle at Ronaldo.
The biggest 'whistle' Ronaldo has faced in his life was when he was injured for two years. This is nothing, although as a person, not so much as a footballer, nobody likes being whistled. But people are going to get bored with whistling him, then they'll stop.

And start on someone else, like Makelele, perhaps?
That's the way the Bernabeu is. The fans here always want more and more. But I would argue that Makelele is our most important player.

Does Ronaldo deserve the whistles?
No. He's playing well. People might say he doesn't chase or pressure the opponents, but he's got people behind him that do that. He's a guy that scores goals – and lots of them. If he started running round all over the place, he might not arrive so composed in the penalty area.

There's even more pressure on him because he's Ballon d'Or holder and World Player of the Year.
And he deserves it – he's the No 1.

This year there's a campaign in Spain for Raul to win the awards.
…and in Italy there's one for Del Piero. And in England for Beckham, in Holland for Van Nistelrooy. And in Brazil after the World Cup there were 180 million people who wanted Ronaldo to win it. There's too much patriotism, but you have to respect that. I don't care who wins it.

Last year, rather than Ronaldo, it could have been you. You had a great chance.
I had very little chance.

But, surely, everyone had you down as favourite. Did it upset you not to win it?
No, I've never said I was the best in the world, or that I wanted to be.

Before the award was announced, you said that if you won it you would dedicate your success to all the defenders in the world.
Yes, because there's always a campaign for forwards to win awards. But what about Paolo Maldini, for example? People don't talk about defenders enough. Take Michel Salgado: he's a *grandisimo* footballer, playing exceptionally this year. At the end of this season when people look back, I think Michel should be considered among the best – but he's got to score a goal!

It looked set for a derby in the Champions League semi-final, only for Barcelona to revert to their domestic form. Why are they having such an atrocious season?
I don't know.

And you don't care?
[Smiles] And I don't care! Everyone should sort out their own problems. But I don't think Barça will go down; they have far too much history. I suppose there is a slight chance, but in football there's a chance of anything happening – that's what's so good about it.

Instead, your semi-final opponents will be Juventus. How do you rate them?
I saw them play against Roma recently and they were perfect. Perfect. Pavel Nedved is playing very well, as is Alessandro Del Piero – and David Trezeguet, of course. But above all they defend exceptionally.

Yet they say the Italian style has changed. Has it?
A bit, yes.

Enough for Italian teams to be considered attacking?
[Grinning] Nah! And that could be more dangerous for us, to be honest. We prefer teams who play football.

You recently dived to try to win a penalty against Barcelona in La Liga, which was rather out of character – especially as you were in such a good position to shoot or pass. What happened?
I fell a bit late, that's true, but it was a penalty – there was definitely contact. I felt Gabri's hand on my back and I went down because, although I could have passed to Ronaldo, it was difficult, and I thought there was a chance the referee would blow for a penalty. Of course, there was also the chance of me getting a yellow card.

After your recent sending-off against Portugal, though, shouldn't you be treading carefully? After all, your sanction hasn't been decided yet.
No, no, not at all. That's got nothing to do with it. What happened against Portugal was a reaction to a foul that wasn't a foul. Against Barcelona was totally different – I was just trying to help my team.

So what happened against Portugal, and why? Some suggested that you got a push in the back from Rivaldo, which made you clash with the referee.
I don't think there was a push in my back. I went to the referee to remonstrate with him for the foul that he'd given – that's all. I was annoyed because other things had occurred earlier which he didn't blow for, and that wound me up.

'I've played lots of games for Brazil and that's because, not in spite of, Real Madrid'

Do you fear that FIFA might try to make an example of you because you're such a high-profile footballer?
No. I'm not worried. I'll miss the Mexico game and I assume there will be a sanction beyond that but I don't know. I've sent my lawyers to Zurich and I've sent a letter to FIFA. For now, I'll just wait and see.

Some have said that it's better that you miss some Brazil matches; that way Real Madrid benefit.
Whoever says that doesn't know me. I want to play every game for Brazil – always.

But the clubs, including yours, don't see it like that.
Maybe so – and just wait until the Confederations Cup. You'll find that loads of national teams are going to have huge problems with the clubs.

How do you see the club versus country debate? Would you prefer to play for Madrid or Brazil?
Both. Besides, you can't choose – they go hand in hand. If you're playing well for your club you get involved in the national team. I've played lots of games for Brazil and that's because, not in spite of, Real Madrid. It's because Madrid have given me the chance to play regularly and at such a high level. But don't forget that for any player representing your national team is *importantisimo*…and that includes South Americans.

Especially South Americans?
Maybe more than most. If you ask most South Americans, they'll tell you that the importance of wearing your national shirt is incredible.

Yet South American internationals annoy big European clubs even more, not least because of the long journeys and the sheer number of games. Something needs to be done, doesn't it?
We play more World Cup qualifying games than Europeans, but I don't care – FIFA has to decide how often we play.

This year you're playing very well indeed – better, even, than last year.
People want me to score goals, and I can't always do that, but I'm very happy this year. Last year I had problems with my knee, which stopped me being full-pelt all the time. Physically, I feel well. I'm 30 and feel like I'm really settling into my game.

Let's talk about the World Cup. For the first time ever nobody expected much from Brazil.
That's because we struggled to qualify. We changed managers and that really damaged us. Then Scolari came in and got us together – me, Cafu, Dida, Roque Junior, Rivaldo and so on – and told us: "I'm going to sort things out off the pitch, but on the field it is up to you to resolve this." There was dialogue right from the start.

Just before the World Cup, you promised Brazil would get to the Final. Were you really that confident?
Yes. The qualifying rounds have nothing to do with the finals. I said back then that most of our players play in Europe and leave Spain or Italy for the qualifying matches on a long, long flight, arrive tired, the following day, play the day after, often without training, and fly straight back, which is tough. I also knew it would help not being favourites – it took some of the incentive away from our opponents. Look what Senegal did to France, or Korea against Spain.

What about England? Against Brazil it was as if they didn't even want to attack in the second half.
It's not that; they were playing a strong team. They didn't deliberately sit back.

Did Ronaldinho mean his goal?
Yes. And it wasn't Seaman's fault – it was very difficult to stop. It went up almost too much and dropped very, very quickly. It's hard for a goalkeeper to run backwards to save.

What does the future hold for you? What's left?
Six years. I won't be going until I'm 40, like Donato. I'll retire, go back to Brazil and perhaps think about becoming a manager. But first, six more years as a player.

There's been talk in the English press about you going to Arsenal or Manchester United.
No, no, there's nothing in that. Or in stories about Italy. I've got two years left on my contract and then we'll see, but I want to stay here.

Six years gives you time to maybe win even more European Cups.
At least two, definitely.

That would make five – just one short of the all-time record holder, Paco Gento.
Yes. It would be lovely to look back and know that I had formed part of history.

Fact file

Club Real Madrid (Spa)
Country Brazil
Born April 10, 1973, in Garca
Previous clubs Uniao Sao Joao, Palmeiras, Internazionale (Ita)
International debut December 1991, v Uruguay
International caps 95 (7 goals)
Honours World Cup 2002; World Club Cup 1998, 2002; Champions League 1998, 2000, 2002; Spanish League 1997, 2001

Quiet man of Turin

Paddy Agnew on the country-loving midfielder in brilliant form for Juventus and the Czech Republic

LEGEND has it that, during his five-year stay at Rome club Lazio, Czech Republic midfielder Pavel Nedved visited the Eternal City about twice a year for non-footballing reasons. Nedved preferred to live some 30 kilometres outside the city in the exclusive green park of Olgiata, home to the wealthy and, even better, just 6km down the road from Lazio's Formello training ground.

Likewise, when he moved to Juventus in the autumn of 2001, Nedved initially spent much time in a Turin hotel as he engaged in an exhaustive search for an ideal home for himself, his wife Ivana and children Pavel and Ivana junior. When his Juventus team-mates would ask him what was the problem about finding suitable accommodation, the laconic Czech would reply that he wanted a house "in the countryside".

Frustrated with Nedved's continuing failure to find such a house, a team-mate suggested that he might as well follow "Doctor Agnelli" home after training. That way, he explained half-jokingly, Nedved would end up in Mandria, outside Turin, home to Umberto Agnelli, president of Juventus and head of auto giant Fiat.

Nedved took the remark seriously. He organised a visit to Mandria and immediately liked what he saw. His real estate guide was not a little surprised, not to say delighted, too, when Nedved liked the villa he had come to visit so much that he bought it on the spot, cash down.

Living in the "countryside", be it Olgiata in Rome or Mandria in Turin, is not a question of environmentalist credo for Nedved as much as an acknowledgement that a rural surrounding provides two essential requisites for his football-focused lifestyle. Firstly, it offers him peace and quiet, far from the madding crowd of media cameras and microphones. Secondly, it provides him with a ready-made training ground since he is a player who often starts off the working day with a serious bout of jogging.

With his long, flowing, blond locks and his sweet Mittel-Europa face, Nedved looks like Rin Tin Tin turned footballer. Beneath those impish good looks, however, lurks a teak-tough athlete.

Take, for example, Juve's 2-0 April derby win over Torino. That game was marked by some rustic football from the Torino defence, with Nedved falling victim to a dangerously high tackle by Stefano Fattori in the first half that forced him out of the game, much to the chagrin of the Juve camp.

Next morning, as media reports were claiming that he was definitely out of the Champions League tie with Barcelona, Rin Tin Tin was working out in his own private gym, with an ice pack on his injured knee. Two days later, Juventus coach Marcello Lippi confirmed that Nedved would be ready in time to play against Barcelona, adding: "He's a tough, tough cookie. If it were up to him, he'd play in every match."

Beneath the impish Nedved good looks, too, is a player with a truly splendid indifference to the off-the-field media requirements of the modern footballing age. In media jargon, Nedved is 'not a good talker'. In reality, he is a dedicated professional who takes every aspect of his work, including press conferences, desperately seriously.

In the aftermath of Juve's Champions League second phase debacles against Manchester United this season, anxious reporters were keen to sniff out any possible sign of tension between players and Lippi. It was Nedved who definitively ended such speculation during a touchline interview minutes after Juventus had beaten Internazionale 3-0 in a top-of-the-table clash, just four days after the second defeat by United.

Asked about the speculation, Nedved replied: "We were disappointed with the result against Manchester United but that was it, there was no tension between players and coach."

The impish Nedved looks also mask the reality of a player whose trademark is relentless running and a 110 per cent aggressive attitude. His attacking midfield play, his ability to score (especially but not exclusively with his left foot) and his competitive attitude have already proved major elements in two Serie A title successes, first with Sven Goran Eriksson's Lazio and then with Juventus last season.

Add to those technical accomplishments an ability to hit viciously effective benders at corner-kicks and free-kicks (not to mention rapid-fire low crosses from the byline), and it is not difficult to see why his presence relieves Alessandro Del Piero of much of the playmaking responsibilities at Juventus, while at the same time supplying grade A ammunition for strikers such as David Trezeguet and Marco Di Vaio.

Ironically, Nedved's most recent championship winner's medal came at the end of a season that had begun anything other than well. As a newcomer at Juventus, he had struggled to find his position and best form. Nedved was certainly not the first newly-arrived big name to struggle at the 'Old Lady'. Michel Platini and Zinedine Zidane also underwent a difficult start in Turin. One season on, however, such has been the brilliant form shown by Nedved both with Juventus and the formidable Czech Republic side that many Italian critics are already nominating him to collect the various end-of-season player awards.

Former Juventus and Poland star Zibi Boniek offered a wholehearted endorsement, saying: "Nedved is the only irreplaceable player in the squad, and for that reason it is a crisis for Juventus if he is missing. Del Piero and Trezeguet, for example, can be replaced [by Di Vaio and Marcelo Zalayeta], but there's no substitute for Nedved.

"People like to compare him to me and I find that a great compliment because I reckon he is one of the best midfielders in the world. He has pace, courage, a steely temperament and, what is more, he is an Eastern European player. I mean, he is a very serious dude."

Another of the great Juventus stars of the past, Giampiero Boniperti, is equally enthusiastic in his appraisal, saying: "He's a great player and one I really like. He always plays well because he plays every game as if it were a do-or-die derby."

In a recent interview with *Gazzetta Dello Sport*, Nedved was asked to reflect on his thus far successful season. With typical understatement, he explained: "I'm having a great run at the moment and I'm lucky because everything is going my way. But I don't get too excited when things go well, any more than I get depressed when things go wrong. For example, during my first difficult months at Juventus I didn't entertain negative thoughts, I just concentrated on improving my form."

Asked if he agreed with those critics who argue that, at the age of 30, he is a better player than ever, Nedved again replied in down-to-earth mode: "I think the important

Fact file

Club Juventus (Ita)
Country Czech Republic
Born August 30, 1972, in Cheb
Previous clubs Dukla Prague, Sparta Prague, Lazio (Ita)
International debut June 1994, v Republic of Ireland
International caps 69 (16 goals)
Honours Cup-winners Cup 1999 (Lazio); European Supercup 1999; Czechoslovak/Czech League 1993, 1994, 1995 (Sparta); Czech Cup 1996 (Sparta); Italian League 2000 (Lazio), 2002 (Juventus); Italian Cup 1998, 2000 (Lazio)

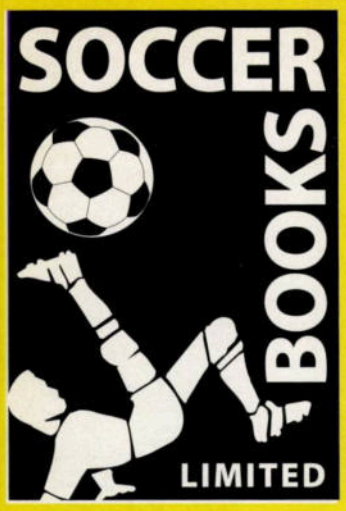
thing is to play in an attacking side. Juventus have a strong defence but we do not limit ourselves to that; we're always looking to score, and that suits my game perfectly." So much for the Spanish critics who slated Juve for their "negative attitude" during their 1-1 home draw with Barcelona in the Champions League quarter-final first leg.

In Serie A, Juventus remain very much on course to win a 27th title. But Nedved has no doubts about just what is required in the gruelling run up the final stretch. "You win the title by collecting points even when you're playing badly," he said. "The last two months of the season will be very difficult for us and we certainly won't be at our best for every game. At that point, you win the title by using your head and by being determined. That way, you make up for those moments when the legs are weary. Mind you, this is something Juventus are very good at."

While Juve have certainly had days when they play badly but collect the points, the same can hardly be said of Nedved's Czech Republic side. Currently joint top of Euro 2004 qualifying Group 3 with Holland, the Czechs owe much to Nedved, scorer of his 16th goal for his country in a 4-0 dismissal of Austria on April 2 and linchpin of a vintage Czech performance in a 1-1 draw with the Dutch in Rotterdam four days earlier.

Of the Czech Republic's Euro 2004 qualifying prospects, Nedved is again cautious, saying: "The group is still wide open, but we were well pleased with the draw in Holland. It's too early to be making forecasts, but I'd have to say we're bang in there."

Intriguingly, Nedved is much less cautious in his assessment of Juve's Serie A chances. In a statement that sounds suspiciously like a personal credo, he says: "This is the time of the season when you begin to run out of energy. But I'll be giving it everything I've got and that might be good enough to win the title."



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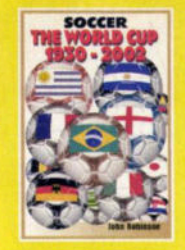

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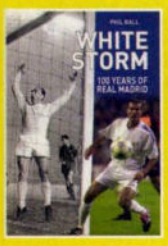

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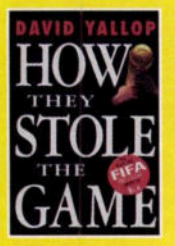

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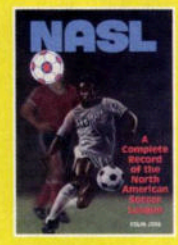

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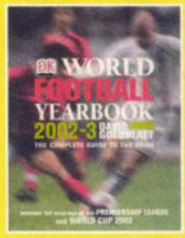

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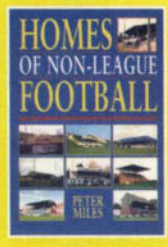

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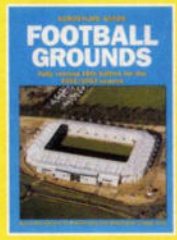

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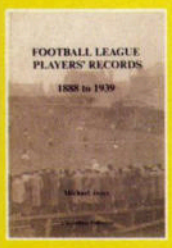

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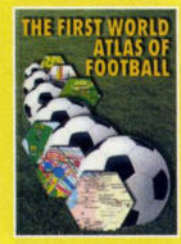

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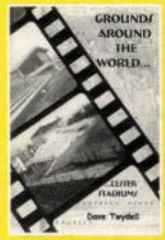

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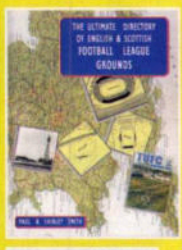

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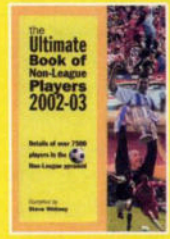

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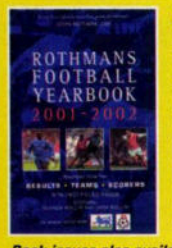

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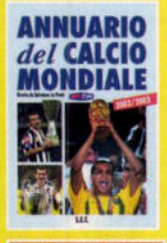

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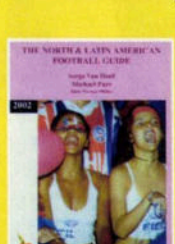

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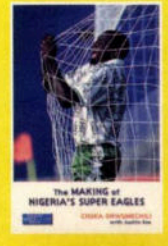

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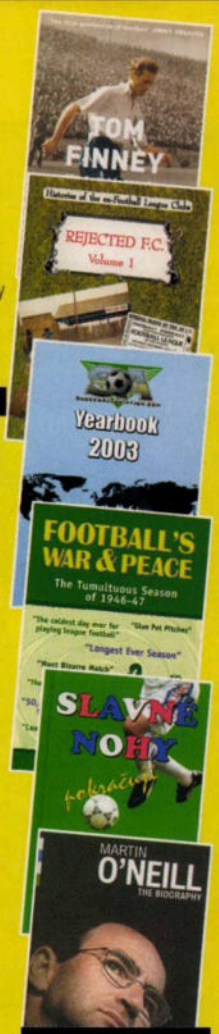

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BUENOS AIRES

Redeeming feature...Racing Club, a rare company-owned club, are still in debt but on an upward financial and footballing curve

Busyness as usual...

Argentina's capital is ridden by economic problems, says Eric Weil, but remains the world's busiest footballing metropolis

BUENOS AIRES is the city with the most stadiums in the world – there are 36 within its confines and another 37 dotted around the outlying suburbs.

Having 73 stadiums and the same number of professional or semi-professional clubs in a city of 12 million inhabitants is one of many good reasons why its clubs are struggling financially.

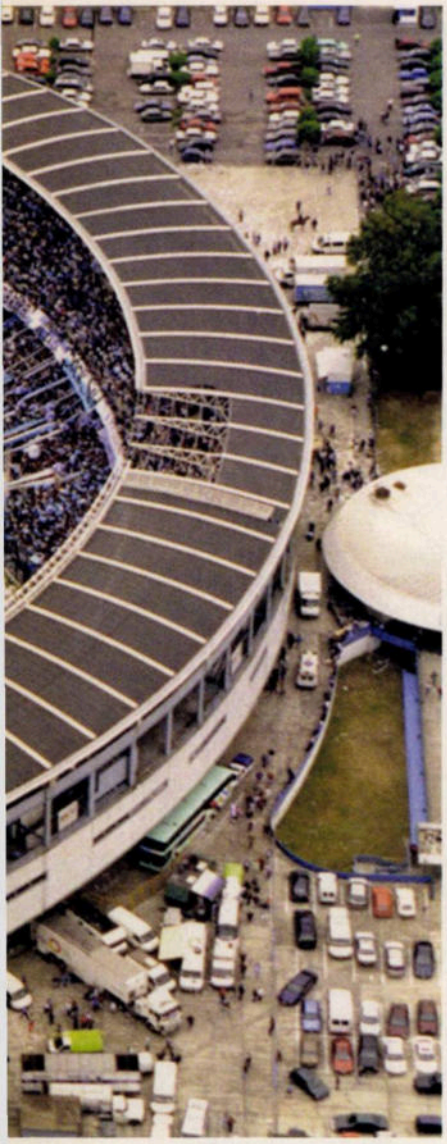
Of course, some of these stadiums are only fields surrounded by a few steps, and the pitches themselves are generally in poor condition. If Argentina were awarded the World Cup today, none of the stadiums in Buenos Aires would be passed fit by FIFA to stage matches – not even those of River Plate and Velez Sarsfield, which hosted games during the 1978 World Cup finals. If thorough inspections were performed under British safety standards, very few, if any, would be allowed to stay open.

As for all-seater stadiums, which FIFA wants and for which the Argentinian FA had originally set 2000 as a deadline for clubs to convert to...forget it.

There are no government grants forthcoming and it would be impossible in most cases unless terraces are completely rebuilt because the steps are too narrow for seats. Curiously, River Plate's Monumental stadium has numbers painted on the side of its steps with divisions giving the appearance of seats, but nobody sits. Besides, while in Britain seating spectators reduced hooliganism, here, hooligans would rip them out to throw on to the pitch.

At many stadiums, crumbling terraces are the norm. There are few safety barriers, while narrow steps increase the danger for spectators. Several – even a couple used by top division clubs – have wooden planks instead of concrete steps, which heave up and down when excited fans start jumping around, giving the impression that they will break at any moment, sending hundreds tumbling to their deaths.

Long before Argentina's current financial chaos set in, stadiums were crumbling. For years, Argentina has been a prolific exporter of footballers, mainly to Europe. But the millions brought in by these



sales never seemed to find their way to funding stadium improvements.

Argentina's recent steep devaluation of the peso has made it even more profitable to sell players – making it easily the main income for clubs to stay alive – but at the same time sales have dried up because clubs in other parts of the world are also experiencing financial difficulties. The plight of local clubs has been accentuated by bad administration and even corruption.

You may wonder why clubs do not arrange to share stadiums, and consequently the cost of their upkeep. But sharing is a dirty word here. Fans, club members and most officials are dead against it. Boca Juniors, arguably the city's most popular club, have a stadium hemmed in by houses and which cannot be enlarged even though they badly need to increase their 59,000 capacity. But when president Mauricio Macri – one of the few club officials with business sense – suggested building a giant stadium jointly with their main rivals, River Plate, the general outcry forced him to quickly forget the idea.

Meanwhile, in nearby La Plata, the provincial government is building a stadium to be shared by the city's two First Division clubs, Estudiantes and Gimnasia y Esgrima. Both clubs oppose the idea but may be forced to use it as they are being refused planning permission to do any work on their existing stadiums.

The big stadiums of Racing Club and Independiente are within a stone's throw of each other in Avellaneda, an industrial district of Buenos Aires, but they would never agree to share.

Buenos Aires' many clubs, like those in the rest of the country, are privately owned. So far only two clubs, both of whom had been declared bankrupt, have been taken over by companies: top division Racing Club, at the end of 2000, and, more recently, Third Division Ferro Carril Oeste.

Private club members (Boca have close to 50,000) are generally against the idea, feeling that they would lose their rights. All the clubs are all-sports clubs, even though at many there is little more than soccer...and it is soccer that produces the debts.

Buenos Aires may be among the most football-mad cities in the world, but while the game takes up a good part of many conversations, actual gate receipts are low and today make up only a small part of the clubs' revenue. One reason is the amount of soccer on TV and another is hooliganism, which is cited by 60 per cent of former spectators as the reason they do not attend matches any more.

'If Argentina were awarded the World Cup today, none of the stadiums in Buenos Aires would be passed fit by FIFA to stage matches'

On the other hand, club members have free admittance to their own stadiums. So at some top division matches there are often no more than 1,000 paying spectators, while in the Fourth Division, clubs are sometimes lucky to get three figures.

The rather ramshackle stadium of recently-promoted top division Arsenal, in greater Buenos Aires, holds only 10,000 spectators and they have no money to enlarge it. As a result, they have to play all their home games at the nearby ground of Lanus, which was renovated in 1994 and holds 47,000.

Hooliganism remains a constant problem. The authorities have been accused of not doing enough to stamp it out – hooligans seldom go to jail – but their cause is not helped by many club officials, who support the *barras bravas* (hooligan gangs) with free tickets, fares to away matches and even cash.

At important derby clashes the home club have to pay for up to 1,500 police and security staff – another drain on the budget – but at some lower division games the police (required by law) almost outnumber spectators. There are high wire fences around grounds, but most of the trouble occurs on the terraces or around the stadiums and has resulted in over 170 deaths since 1939.

Stadiums with a capacity of 25,000 or more must now have video surveillance cameras, but this costly equipment has not been very successful in reducing trouble.

Apart from selling players, clubs have relied increasingly on TV money and sponsorship to make ends meet, but funds from these other sources have also been declining. As a result players' salaries – the biggest outlay – have been cut and are often not paid on time.

Yet thousands of kids want to be footballers – at the same time that the pitches for them to play on are disappearing. Clubs increasingly rely on indoor and small outdoor fields at suburban clubs to scout talent.

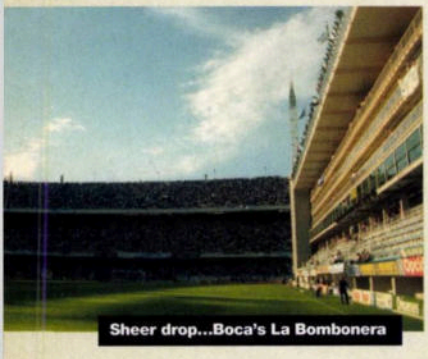
As for new stadiums, San Lorenzo sold their valuable ground in central Buenos Aires to a supermarket and built a new, rather ugly one further out. This holds 43,500 and has room to build more capacity. Yet it is located in a dangerous shanty town – hardly an improvement for their fans.

But life in the world's busiest football city goes on.

Rivals...Boca Juniors (blue) and River Plate could never ground-share

Buenos Aires – The Clubs

● **BOCA JUNIORS** (1)
Founded in 1905 in the poor docks area of the city, the club have stayed close to their working-class roots and are arguably the most popular in Buenos Aires. Boca have vied with arch-rivals River Plate to be the dominant force in


Sheer drop...Boca's La Bombonera

Argentina over the years. Among their many titles are four Libertadores Cups and two World Club Cups. La Bombonera (the Chocolate Box), inaugurated in 1940, holds 59,000 (16,000 seated) on very steep terraces – hence the nickname. In the 1970s there were plans for a 150,000-seater to be built on a man-made island in the River Plate, but architects warned the structure would sink once full.

● **RIVER PLATE** (8)
Formed in 1901 and founder members of the First Division seven years later. Moved from humble surroundings to their current upper middle-class district in the north of the city – the reason they are sneeringly referred to as *Los Millonarios* by rivals. River became an all-conquering force, producing some great teams. Their 1940s forward line, *La Maquina* (The Machine), inspired awe. Later, the club produced the likes of Alfredo Di Stefano and, more recently, Mario Kempes and Hernan Crespo. The Estadio Monumental opened in 1938 and was renovated for the 1978 World Cup to hold 78,000. Still Argentina's biggest stadium and is used for most internationals.

● **SAN LORENZO** (4)
Named after one of their founders, a local priest, Lorenzo Massa, the club were closing champions in 1995 and 2001. Have since moved to a 43,500-capacity ground.

● **VELEZ SARSFIELD** (5)
Two League titles, a Libertadores Cup and a World Club Cup have been the high points for a club that have enjoyed only intermittent success over the years. Charismatic Paraguayan goalkeeper Jose Luis Chilavert was a driving force in the side during the mid to late 1990s.

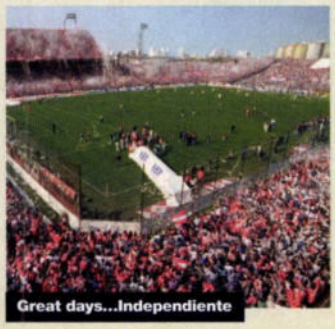
● **HURACAN** (2)
One of Buenos Aires' poor relations. The 1994 closing championship runners-up are now heading for the drop to the Second Division.

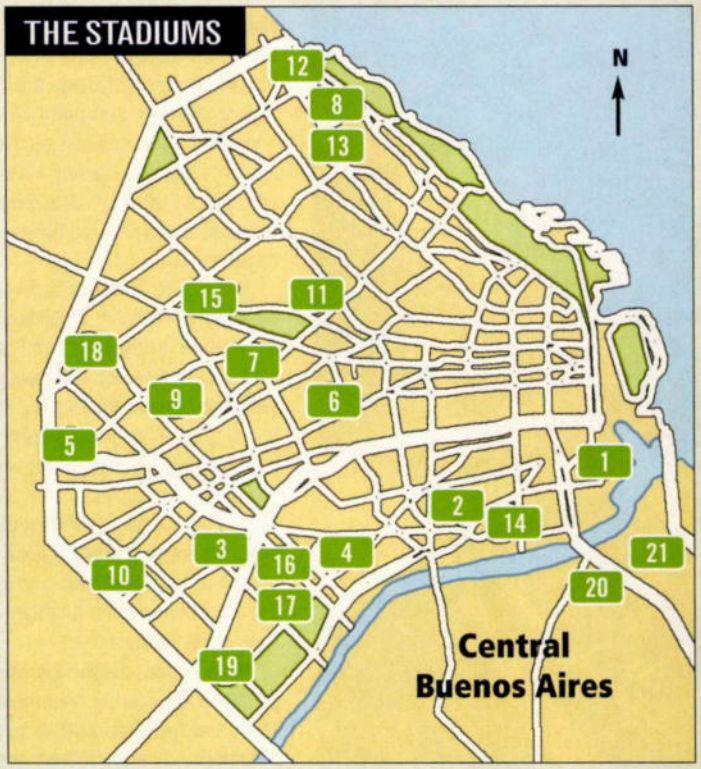
● **INDEPENDIENTE** (21)
This season's opening champions but struggling in the *clausura*. Traditionally one of the city's 'big five' along with Boca, River, Racing and San Lorenzo, the club from the Avellaneda district had their great days in the 1960s and early 70s, winning six Libertadores Cups.

● **RACING CLUB** (20)
Racing's current stadium opened in 1950 with government help (President Juan Peron was among their fans) and helped draw support from the better-heeled parts of the city rather than local rivals Independiente's working-class support. Declared bankrupt in 2000 but allowed to keep playing until a private buyer could be found. Racing have been on an upward curve since being taken over by Fernando Marin and his legal firm Blanquiceleste, winning last season's opening championship.

● **NUEVA CHICAGO** (10)
Situated in a thickly-populated cattle market district, which at one time rivalled Chicago's meat-packing district, hence the name. Currently in the top division but have seen better times. The club have good support from the area, as well as one of the more belligerent hooligan gangs.

● **ARGENTINOS JUNIORS** (7)
Diego Maradona's first club has produced numerous other internationals but sold them when still young for economic reasons. Juan Roman Riquelme and Esteban Cambiasso are just two of the recent ones. The stadium is currently


Great days...Independiente



being rebuilt and they play home games at Ferro Carril Oeste's ground. Currently fighting for promotion to the top flight.

● **DEPORTIVO ESPANOL** (3)
Comparatively new club, founded in 1957, who rose rapidly and had a short stay in the top flight but are now bottom of the Second Division. However, their stadium, opened in 1980, is one of the best at that level. It holds 18,500 and is often rented by other clubs.

● **DEFENSORES DE BELGRANO** (12)
Their stadium on the edge of the capital attracts low crowds due to its proximity to River Plate (for whom they are a farm club). It is a forbidding place – behind one side of the ground is a navy installation which was a notorious torture centre during the military government.

● **FERRO CARRIL OESTE** (6)
The former Western Railway Club when the railways were in British hands, they have recently been declared bankrupt and since taken over by a leading player agent. Won two League titles in the 1980s but are now in the Third Division.

● **ATLANTA** (11)
Another former First Division club who are now struggling to stay in the Third Division. Stadium opened in 1922 on land acquired from Chacarita Juniors.

New look...San Lorenzo

● **ALL BOYS** (9)
Stadium was renamed 'Malvinas Argentinas' (Falklands) in 1982 on the day the Argentinian army invaded the islands, but the club never changed their English name. Currently in the Third Division.

● **NOT FORGETTING...**
Excursionistas (13), Barracas Central (14), Communicaciones (15), Deportivo Riestra (16), Sacachispas (17), Lamadrid (18) and Lugano (19) are other professional and semi-professional clubs in the central Buenos Aires area, but all currently play in the Fourth and Fifth Divisions.

Greater Buenos Aires is also home to First Division clubs Lanus, Arsenal, Chacarita Juniors and Banfield, Second Division sides Quilmes and Los Andes, as well as a number of teams lower down the pyramid.

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Keir Radnedge
COMMENTARY

Michel's mind games

Platini plots a path to the UEFA presidency

EYEBROWS shot up all around Europe when Michel Platini suggested scrapping the Champions League. Kill the goose that lays the golden eggs? Antagonise Europe's biggest clubs? What was he thinking about? Was the newly-elected member of the FIFA and UEFA executive seeking to commit political suicide?

Platini's comments were so outspoken and revisionist that all his obvious would-be critics were baffled into caution.

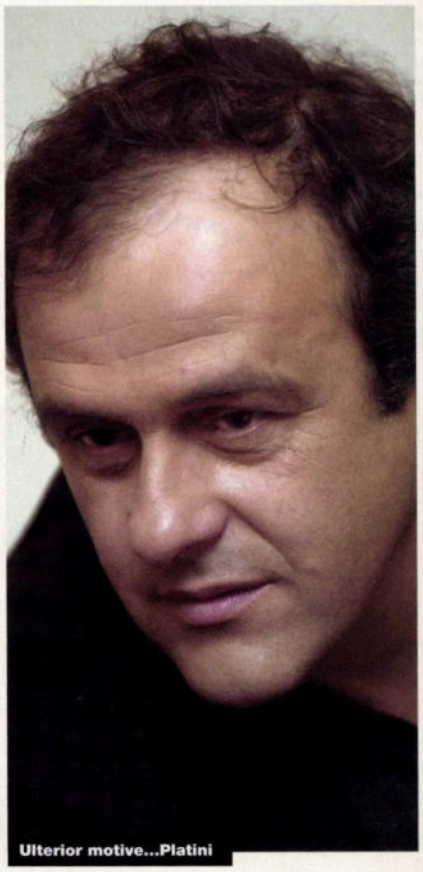
"Perhaps he is upset because he never played for Real Madrid," said the European champions' president Florentino Perez with a smile. "Maybe he is still learning the ropes of football diplomacy," said Norway's Per Ravn Omdal.

Perhaps Platini had another agenda. He told me 18 months ago, after his initial spell as (unelected) counsellor to FIFA president Sepp Blatter: "One thing I have learned is that you may have great ideas but without votes you have no power to change anything."

Last year Platini obtained enough votes to become an executive member. Next target is the UEFA presidency. Indeed, had Lennart Johansson not been persuaded by chief executive Gerd Aigner to stand again last year as a 'Stop Platini' candidate, then the Frenchman would be there already.

Platini says he wants to see the Champions League and UEFA Cup rolled up into one competition organised on the 'old' direct elimination basis. Some 256 clubs playing each other home and away in a knockout system.

Why? For the sake of football democracy. Platini does not believe the likes of Real Madrid, Manchester United, Bayern Munich and co should be allowed to play in a tight little elite league of their own. He says: "All Europe's countries have a right to be seen and heard. Bayern Munich should go to play in Georgia and Malta as well as in Spain and England."

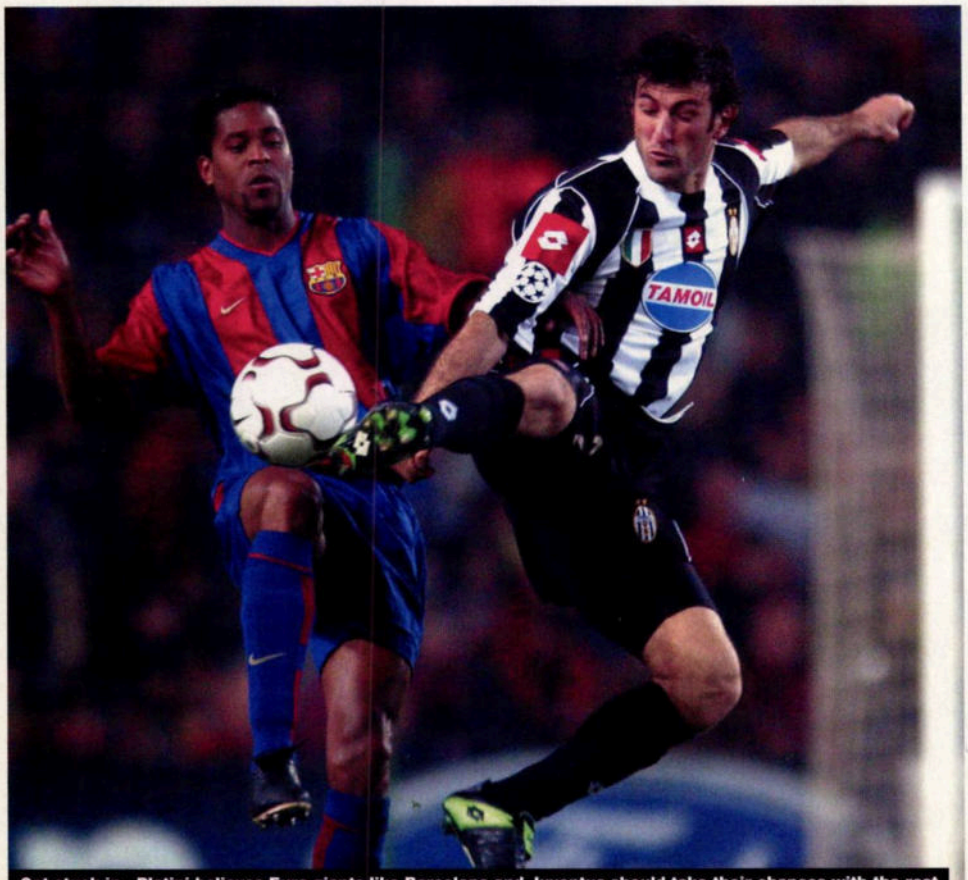


Ulterior motive...Platini

He has a case. The strength of it depends on the very democracy about which he claims to have such concern. UEFA is made up of 52 members, all with one vote each in congress. A significant chunk are from eastern Europe, many of whom feel disenfranchised within UEFA. The recent UEFA congress approved the right of the executive to nominate two extra ad hoc members. This was a gesture towards the East but a gesture that most eastern European officials to whom I spoke considered little more than a patronising insult.

In any case, the device may well be used initially to fill the executive gap left by the absence of an Italian representative (through the Italians' own complacent fault, let it be said).

But the UEFA president is elected not by the executive but by the members – and there are far more minnows than giants. Maybe the only serious question about Platini's comments should be – has he declared his hand too early?



Get stuck in...Platini believes Euro giants like Barcelona and Juventus should take their chances with the rest

German copycats miss the point

BAYERN MUNICH'S squabble with the German League over their secret deal with the now-bankrupt Kirch group has underlined quite how nonsensically many continental officials have perceived the rise of the English Premier League.

Germany, like many other countries, saw the financial success of the top Premier League clubs and sought to copy the model. Their crucial blunder, however, was in believing that it was all a matter of structure. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Premier League's staggering success has been not so much a matter of structure as marketing.

In almost every other country, league competition was created and administered by the national association. This was not the case in England. The Football Association was founded in 1863 but the Football League, an independent company, was created in 1888 by clubs who wanted the regular competition the FA Cup could not provide.

Thus the Football League, while accepting FA jurisdiction in terms of the laws of the game and disciplinary issues, always ran its own affairs. But the big clubs' increasing impatience with the minnow majority led to their conniving with Lancaster Gate to set up the Premier League under the auspices of the FA.

The timing was perfect, on three counts: the PL launch in 1992-93 coincided with an explosion of sports sponsorship, with the arrival of satellite and cable television – most notably Rupert Murdoch's Sky – and, thirdly, with a revival of football's popularity thanks to England's progress to the 1990 World Cup semi-finals.

The national high profile of Manchester United, Liverpool etc turned the Premier League into a money magnet (the commercial effect on clubs left behind in the rump of the Football League is an issue for another day). Germany, Spain, France and Italy saw all that and wanted to copy it – without understanding that, basically, they already had the right structure in place.

Spain appears to have effectively rebalanced the power-sharing arrangement between federation and League; Italy is fighting its way there, slowly and painfully; but the Germans have made a pig's ear of it. Their League is not even led by its own independent professional staff: the executive president, Werner Hackmann, is also president of Hamburg.

That's why Bayern got in such a mess with Kirch in the first place. Open up their accounts to their competitors? Would Matthias Sammer expect Ottmar Hitzfeld to hand over his tactical orders before kick-off? Somehow, I don't think so.

Out of step...Bayern's deal with Kirch highlighted the faults in the German League set-up

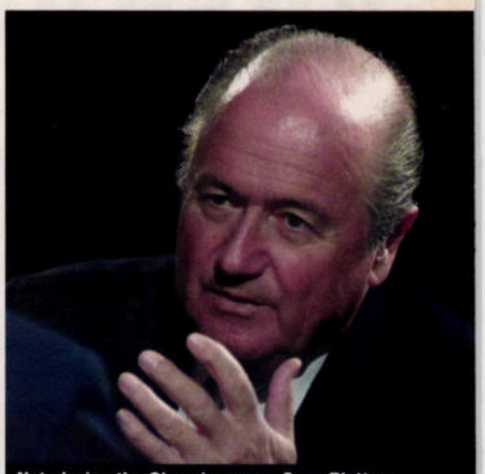
Tognoni's dubious double

GUIDO TOGNONI has set a minor record as the first person to be sacked twice from FIFA by Sepp Blatter.

Tognoni was banished for the first time a decade ago from his role as media director as Blatter (then general secretary) battled to save his own skin under pressure from then president Joao Havelange.

Originally an ice-hockey journalist, Tognoni returned to FIFA as marketing adviser to Blatter in the wake of the ISL collapse. After last year's World Cup he became acting competitions director (whatever that meant) but was then sacked again for comments published in the book *Badfellas*, by John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson.

This is not a new book but a paperback reworking of the original Mainstream title, *Great Balls of Fire*. Tognoni is not the only victim of the book. Sugden and Tomlinson set out purporting to cast an intellectually dispassionate eye over the workings of FIFA. Adoption of the Badfellas title undermines their own academic credibility.


Not playing the Olympic game...Sepp Blatter

Blatter in a fix over drugs

FIFA president Sepp Blatter has blown apart the fragile international consensus over the World Anti-Doping Agency in a manner that may even threaten football's presence at next year's Athens Olympics.

Football's governing body has made little progress over the past year towards signing up to WADA aims despite the active encouragement of Jacques Rogge, president of the International Olympic Committee.

Blatter told UEFA congress: "At FIFA I must say we are not always in agreement with WADA, the monster which has been created to fight doping in sport. In disciplinary terms, we do not believe that team sports can be controlled in the same way as individual sports, especially if a two-year suspension must be obligatory.

"This is not possible because everybody involved has the right to expect a decision should be taken according to the individual circumstances appropriate to each case."

In Copenhagen earlier this year Rogge warned that any sports that did not submit to WADA might be denied participation in Athens. Football has always been considered a lucrative contributor at the Games – outside the United States, at least – partly because of its popularity and partly because it features 32 matches with the consequent effect on ticket sales and revenues.

However, this argument does not hold as much sway with Rogge as with his predecessor, Juan Antonio Samaranch. Also, FIFA snubbed WADA over its dope-test arrangements at the World Cup finals last year in Japan and South Korea by appointing its own non-WADA medical supervisors.

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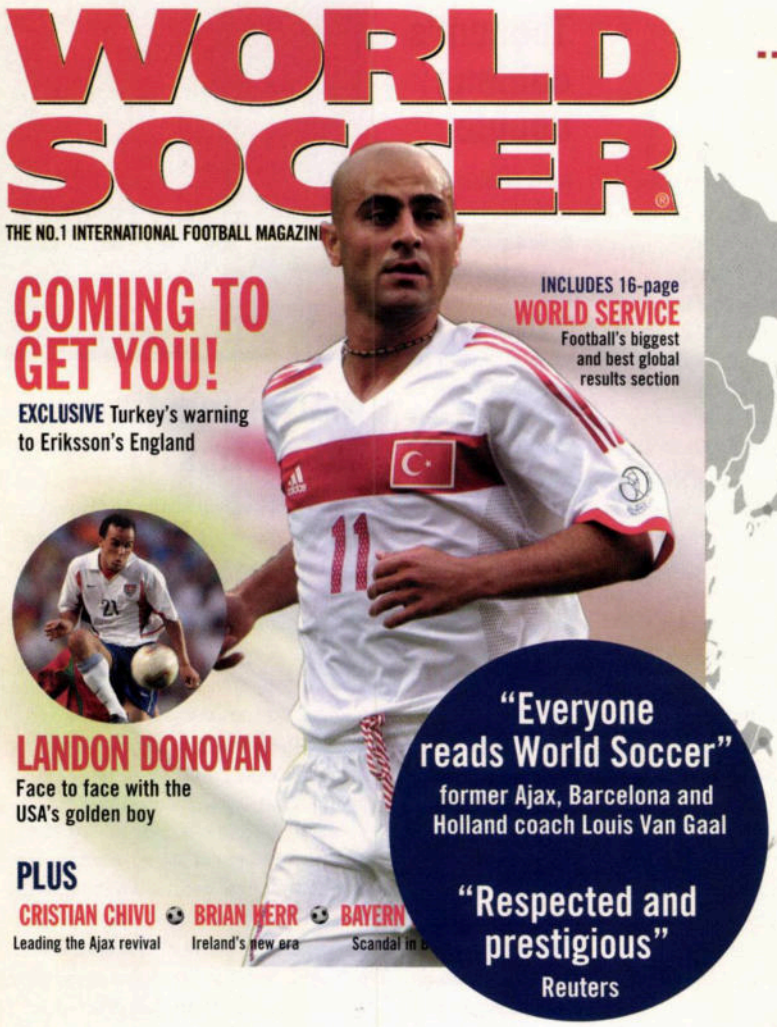

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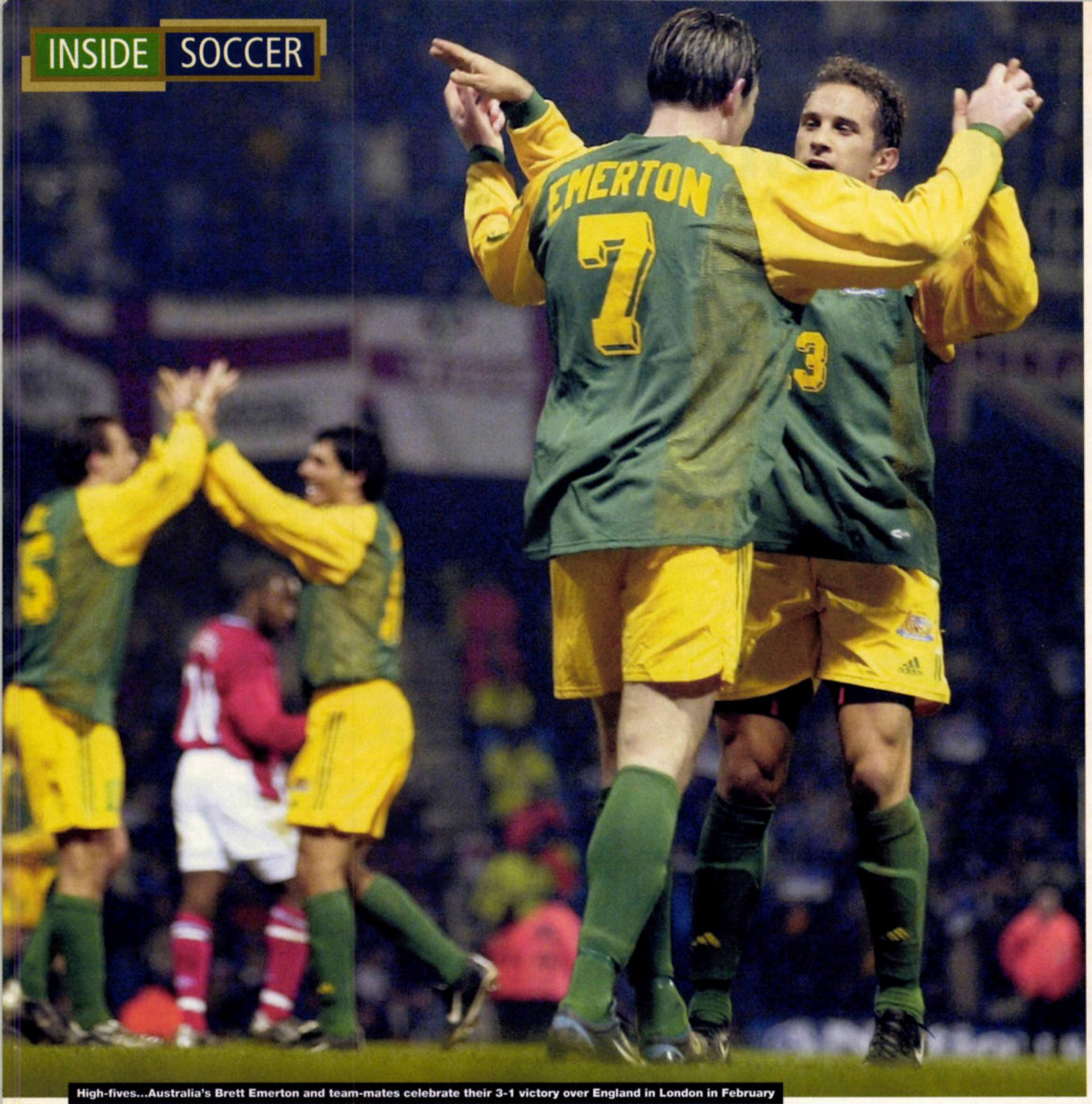


High-fives...Australia's Brett Emerton and team-mates celebrate their 3-1 victory over England in London in February

All shook up Down Under

Gavin Willacy reports on the challenge facing Soccer Australia after the resignation of its entire leadership

AUSTRALIAN soccer has taken a first, reluctant, step towards modernisation and fulfilling the dreams the nation's fans were beginning to think would never come true.

For a decade now, Australia have threatened to become a force in the world game, but each failure to reach the World Cup finals has been greeted by an introspective gnashing of teeth and self-examination. This time it was done by the government, which was fed up with Soccer Australia's failure to make the most of a large, enthusiastic player base and a small group of top-class players. As a consequence, it launched an independent inquiry, led by businessman David Crawford.

The Crawford Report was duly delivered on April 7, recommending that the Soccer Australia (SA) board resign. After three days of furious self-defence, it did exactly that, with recently-appointed chairman Remo Nogarotto likely to be joined by two fellow survivors on an interim board which will be chaired by shopping centre mogul Frank Lowy and feature Melbourne Grand Prix boss Ron Walker and high-profile advertising guru John Singleton.

The new board may become permanent after a general meeting on May 3 as it is seen to combine the best soccer knowledge and business acumen available to SA.

The other 52 changes suggested in the Crawford Report are unlikely to be as swiftly implemented. They include an autonomous National Soccer League (NSL), run under

licence from SA, and restructured voting rights with rewards for increasing player numbers in each Australian state. While the old board, who represented each state, reluctantly backed down, SA is not obliged to do what Crawford suggests. The only threat is that the government will withdraw its £1.5million grant – £450,000 has already been put on hold – but even that is not as big a carrot as it seems: the sacked SA board had just secured £3m sponsorship deals with Adidas and Qantas and got SA into profit, not to mention basking in the glow of a 3-1 win over England in London only two months earlier.

"We were appointed by the state associations to run Soccer Australia and we've done exceptionally well – the results are there to see," claimed indignant director Paul Afkos, who may yet be given a reprieve in the new set-up. "We will implement recommendations in the Crawford Report but not all will be accepted."

Soccer Victoria leader Manny Galanos added: "There are a lot of good things in it but we need time to consider each on its merit."

New outlook...Socceroos coach Frank Farina with former Soccer Australia chairman Remo Nogarotto

Old-fashioned and amateurish

Just like the pre-Adam Crozier Football Association in England, Soccer Australia is considered old-fashioned, amateurish and out of touch by many fans, players and media. "The soccer lovers – the people who own the game – have a problem with Soccer Australia's 'Fawlty Towers' image," says Philip Micallef of Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*. "They have a problem with a body that cannot organise a chook [chicken] raffle, let alone a decent international without a major stuff-up."

Proposed high-profile friendlies with Argentina and Nigeria in the UK have been cancelled, while SA claims that the English FA wanted the Socceroos to play the home nations were embarrassingly pooh-poohed by their London counterparts. All this meant Australia failed to capitalise on the win over England.

"[The fans] have a problem with the organisation's failure to sell the world's greatest game to the world's greatest sporting country," says Micallef. And therein lies the heart of the matter. Soccer Australia has money. It has a huge and rapidly-growing number of players at junior level. Soccer will soon be the No 1 participation sport in a country that can support full-time, high-profile Aussie Rules, rugby league and basketball, as well as three Super 12 rugby union franchises. And only cricket rivals the truly national appeal of soccer, so the opportunity is there to make the sport massive in Australia.

The game also has fans – 80,000 will go to see a major Socceroos match and TV audiences are large enough for Rupert Murdoch to screen live Premiership and Champions League matches on Fox Sports, while SBS show delayed broadcasts on terrestrial. What Australian soccer does not have is excellence, on or off the field. And that is what keeps NSL crowds to a couple of thousand, apart from the phenomenon of Perth Glory, where crowds of 15,000 regularly roar on the West Australians. Aussies watch enough world-class soccer on TV to know that what they are getting is, at best, third-rate.

'We were appointed by the state associations to run Soccer Australia and we've done exceptionally well – the results are there to see'

SA director Paul Afkos gives his indignant response to the recommendation that the board stand down

By contracting the League to 10 clubs, the standard of play should increase. That would mean the end for four clubs and those most at risk are Marconi and Sydney United – two of seven clubs in New South Wales – and New Zealand's hapless Football Kingz. The Kiwis claim a legally-binding agreement with SA, but why would the Australian authorities want to give a helping hand to a country that has taken 'its place' as Oceania representatives at the Confederations Cup this June?

Whoever stays, the new board will insist they improve their image by playing to bigger crowds in smaller stadiums on decent surfaces. That will produce a better product to sell to TV – this year's League had no TV coverage until the play-offs were screened on a minor satellite channel – which in turn should bring in sufficient income to pay for better foreign imports and, most importantly, keep their home-grown stars in Australia for longer.

The NSL went truly national in 1991, just after England had needed an own goal to beat a Socceroos team whose 24-man squad contained just five players based abroad, including Bari-bound Club Brugge forward Frank Farina, now the national coach.

Ferenc Puskas, who had just coached South Melbourne to the title, told *World Soccer*: "Australia has plenty of talented players who can make it at world level."

He was proved right. Nearly 50 years after Joe Marston went from life-guarding on Sydney's northern beaches to captaining Preston in the 1954 FA Cup Final, Aussies are commonplace in many of Europe's top leagues. But their fellow countrymen only get to see them on TV.

Clubs wary of isolation

Australia are in a remarkably similar situation to the United States a decade ago, and it is no surprise the Crawford Report committee went to the US federation to find out how it established Major League Soccer and encouraged its best players to return home to play out their careers. But while the Americans have stumbled up to their current, impressive world standing, the Aussies can learn from their mistakes.

Wary of isolation, NSL clubs are set to join the ever-improving Asian Champions League, giving home-based players a middle ground between NSL and the international game. That should stop the conveyor belt of talent from Australia's youth teams straight to Europe. And while the best will still be lured by the glamour of the Premiership or Serie A, the chances of Mark Viduka and Harry Kewell returning to NSL clubs in their early thirties can only be enhanced.

But the man who may have done most to save Aussie soccer is Basil Scarsella, who persuaded fellow FIFA members to vote for an automatic berth for Oceania at the World Cup finals. Farina can now plan a 10-game assault on qualifying in which he should have all his stars on hand. It may still take them three finals to acclimatise, like it did the USA, but the Socceroos must get to a World Cup before it is too late for the players and for soccer in Australia.

Home ground...Stuttgart's Gottlieb-Daimler Stadion

Felix from the flames

Keir Radnedge reports on the coach who turned Stuttgart into the surprise team of the Bundesliga season

THE NEW reality of German football is expressed in how clubs are coping now that the days of silly money have gone. The financially-promising bonanza of a World Cup hosting beckons three years down the line. But that is far away while the collapse of the Kirch group last year is still sending the after-tremors of its seismic shock through the Bundesliga.

Fact file

Founded 1893
Honours German League 1950, 1952, 1984, 1992; German Cup 1954, 1958, 1997; UEFA Cup runners-up 1989; European Cup-winners Cup runners-up 1998
Record League apps Karl Allgower (1980-91) 338
Record League goals Allgower 129
Most capped player Krassimir Balakov (Bul) 91
Stadium Neckar/Gottlieb-Daimler

For many years Germany had been held up by the rest of western Europe as the audit-aware model to follow. In the wake of the Kirch collapse – and the revelation of Bayern Munich's secret 'bonus' from the company – it became clear the financial picture had never been either as rosy as portrayed or even as effectively policed.

Never mind account controls and licence withdrawals – the German game had been comparatively soft in dealing with its own. The clubs who progress on the pitch over the next few years will be those who were quickest to get a grip on the cold new financial realities.

Stuttgart, surprise package of the Bundesliga this term, are one such club. Two years ago they only just escaped relegation, last season they finished eighth, yet suddenly, under the shrewd tutelage of coach Felix Magath, they find themselves up in second place – albeit a distance adrift of champions-elect Bayern.

'Under the shrewd tutelage of Magath, Stuttgart find themselves in second place, albeit a distance behind champions-elect Bayern'

Stuttgart were led erratically through the 1990s by president Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, a senior politician in Baden-Wurttemberg and the CSU party. But, though he gained promotion of his own to the presidency of the German federation, he left behind a club in financial turmoil. Stuttgart even struggled to obtain their professional licence to permit them to play in the Bundesliga this season.

Cost-cutting measures

Presidential successor Manfred Haas thus set in place a drastic series of cost-cutting measures, hence the reliance now on established veterans, bargain buys and own-product youngsters. That, in itself, explains why Stuttgart were not too disappointed at their UEFA Cup quarter-final elimination by Celtic.

Considering that those ties represented the 15th and 16th of a European campaign which began back in the InterToto Cup, ▶

Inter mission...Hernan Crespo (right) tussles with Valencia's Angulo

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Italy 3 Spain 1

Serie A trio join majestic Madrid in semi-finals

REAL MADRID, playing the sort of football most teams can only dream about, swept aside Manchester United to join three Italian teams – Juventus, Internazionale and Milan – in the Champions League semi-finals.

A hat-trick from World Player of the Year Ronaldo in a thrilling quarter-final second leg at Old Trafford ensured a 6-5 aggregate victory for the defending champions after the Spanish side won the first leg 3-1 in Madrid.

The Brazilian left the field on 68 minutes to a standing ovation from the Old Trafford crowd after scoring a third goal with a stunning long-range shot. "It was a marvellous strike," said United manager Alex Ferguson, "you can't legislate for someone who can produce that."

Ferguson had altered his starting line-up to take account of the absence of Paul Scholes through suspension. He had again left out David Beckham, preferring Ole Solskjaer on the right side of an attacking 4-3-3 formation. But Beckham was to make a dramatic cameo appearance, scoring twice in the last 20 minutes – his first a trademark free-kick, the second a scrambled tap-in – as United went in search of the goals to level a breathtaking tie.

But the tie had effectively been killed off early in the first half when Ronaldo scored his first goal. Madrid were carrying on where they had left off in the Bernabeu, playing mesmerising football, orchestrated by Zinedine Zidane and described by United's Gary Neville as "like playing the Harlem Globetrotters".

Ruud Van Nistelrooy made it 1-1 on the night shortly before half-time, but two further strikes from Ronaldo, either side of an Ivan Helguera own goal, left United chasing the game in vain.

At Old Trafford, Madrid were without striker Raul, the scorer of two goals in the first leg, who was struck down with appendicitis. However, the Spanish side's 'galacticos' – Ronaldo, Zidane, Luis Figo and Roberto Carlos – again outshone anything United could offer.

Zidane was dismissed by Ferguson as a player who "doesn't hurt you", yet the Frenchman had been the star of a first-leg display that left commentators reaching for the superlatives.

After a wonderful cross-shot from Figo looped past Fabien Barthez for Madrid's opening goal, Raul extended the lead with two goals taken with typically effortless ease. Madrid could – and should – have added further goals: Ronaldo was denied a blatant penalty when tripped by Wes Brown, while Barthez escaped punishment after inexplicably handling outside his area.

A Van Nistelrooy header early in the second half gave United a glimmer of hope for the return leg, but it was never going to be enough against a team of Madrid's multiple talents.

Madrid will play Juventus in the semi-finals after the Italian champions overcame Barcelona in extra-time in their quarter-final. Barcelona's European run of 16 matches unbeaten thus came to an end, leaving them with the InterToto Cup as their only realistic chance of continental competition next season.

Barça had gone into the second leg in Spain as favourites after Javier Saviola's goal had cancelled out Paolo Montero's early strike in the first leg in Turin.

Juventus played both legs without injured striker David

Eye on the ball...Ajax's Yakubu sees off Simic of Milan

Trezeguet, relying instead on Alessandro Del Piero in attack and their own collective discipline and organisation in defence.

Pavel Nedved gave Juventus the lead in the second leg with a shot from the edge of the area after cutting in from the left. But Barça replied through Xavi.

The game appeared to turn in Barça's favour when Edgar Davids was sent off 11 minutes from the end of normal time. But Juve held on and grabbed a dramatic winner through substitute Marcelo Zalayeta, who turned in Alessandro Birindelli's cross with six minutes of extra-time left.

An Italian presence in the 2003 Champions League Final was assured when both Milan clubs came through their respective quarter-final ties.

Internazionale can consider themselves the luckier of the two. Goalkeeper Francesco Toldo was the hero of the second leg at Valencia's Mestalla stadium, resisting wave after wave of Spanish attacks as the Italians held out to claim a victory on away goals following a 2-2 aggregate draw.

Inter's Argentinian coach, Hector Cuper, facing his former club, again opted for a defensive, counter-attacking formation, and again Christian Vieri came to his rescue. Vieri, the leading scorer in Serie A this season, scored early goals in both legs before being substituted with a thigh injury which may sideline him for the rest of the season.

In the second leg, Valencia responded with goals from Pablo Aimar and Ruben Baraja but could not find a way past the brilliant Toldo for what would have been a third, decisive goal.

Milan make it Italian treble

Milan secured their place in the semi-finals after beating Ajax, but only thanks to an injury-time goal from Dane Jon Dahl Tomasson.

Milan had the advantage going into the second leg after the opening encounter in Amsterdam had ended 0-0. But Ajax coach Ronald Koeman has fashioned a resilient young side who twice equalised after Milan had gone ahead.

Milan's goals came through Filippo Inzaghi and then Andrii Shevchenko (both headers from deflected crosses). Jari Litmanen, a half-time substitute, scored Ajax's first equaliser, turning in Andy Van der Meyde's cross. Then Steven Pienaar scrambled the ball home for the second from a Zlatan Ibrahimovic knockdown.

At 2-2, Ajax would have gone through on away goals. But Milan were to have the last laugh. With seconds remaining, Tomasson saw the ball over the line after Inzaghi had poked Massimo Ambrosini's header past Ajax keeper Bogdan Lobont.

The Italians had, once again, done just enough.

John Holmesdale

UEFA CUP
Seville calling

Celtic and Porto prepare for Final showdown

THOUSANDS of fans in Portugal and Scotland will not see it this way, but the UEFA Cup Final between FC Porto and Celtic only places a spotlight on the problems facing the competition.

The clubs bring great traditions and a litany of achievement on both domestic and international stages to Seville's Estadio Olimpico. But it is a fact that neither club would feature in anyone's 'Euro Premiership'.

Boavista's progress to the brink of the Final says everything about the credibility gap. Coach Jaime Pacheco achieved a minor miracle in taking the less fashionable Oporto side that far. But look at the way they did it: narrow aggregate victories over opposition from 'only' – with due respect – Israel and Cyprus. They then overcame Paris Saint-Germain and Hertha Berlin on away goals and Malaga on penalties; PSG are ninth in France, Hertha fourth in Germany and Malaga ninth in Spain.

Not that Martin O'Neill's men found Boavista easy in the semi-final. They struggled to overcome their opponents' cynical pragmatism for all the first leg and all but the last 10 minutes of the second leg. Henrik Larsson even missed a first-leg penalty, then made amends in the 50th minute. Boavista had taken the lead three minutes earlier but, even then, had depended parasitically on an own goal from Joos Valgaeren.

Celtic struggled worthily but ineffectually for much of the return in the part-rebuilt Bessa stadium. But, at least, they tried to be positive while Boavista squeezed the life out of the game. Larsson, with his ninth goal of the campaign, properly punished Portuguese parsimony.

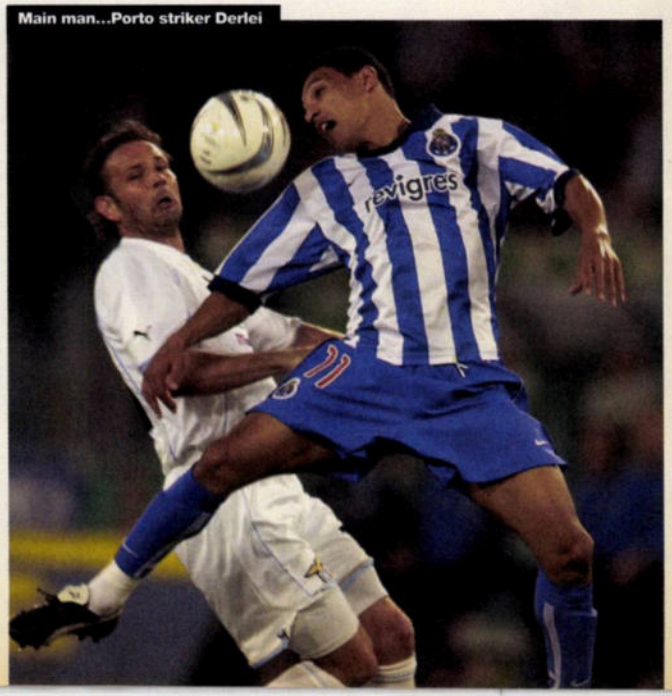
The Bhoys have been impressive in spirit and discipline away from home in Europe. Yet they will be outsiders against FC Porto, who have run away with the Portuguese League. With the likes of rugged Jorge Costa at the back, controversial new Portugal playmaker Deco and Brazilian Derlei up front, they present a chalk and cheese comparison to Boavista.

Porto made notably short work of defensively-hesitant Lazio in the semi-finals. In the first leg goals from Maniche, Derlei (two) and the coveted Helder Postiga saw them recover from Claudio Lopez's sixth-minute strike to floor the Italian club 4-1. Lazio coach Roberto Mancini made all sorts of brave noises ahead of the return but, with Lopez missing a 57th-minute penalty, all that hot air evaporated into the steam of a goalless draw.

Derlei and Larsson are joint top scorers in the UEFA Cup with nine goals apiece. Whoever sneaks the award in their personal duel should take his club with him to a first-ever UEFA Cup success.

Keir Radnedge

Main man...Porto striker Derlei



Under threat...Wales's win over Azerbaijan could prove pointless

EURO 2004 QUALIFIERS

Wales sweat on Azeri ban

FIFA's suspension of Azerbaijan for the Azeri government's interference in the federation has thrown a pall of uncertainty across **Group 9** of the European Championship qualifiers.

The Azeris can still put their house in order but time is running short for their Euro 2004 campaign. All their results could be expunged, which would particularly upset group leaders Wales, who have beaten Azerbaijan twice, 2-0 away and 4-0 in Cardiff. Mark Hughes' men would lose not only the six points but also a plus-six goal difference.

Serbia & Montenegro (the former Yugoslavia) would benefit, however, especially since they dropped two points to Azerbaijan after only drawing 2-2 at home in February.

The Azeris had been warned last year that political interference in the federation and a string of internal power battles could prompt punitive action – which was duly implemented by FIFA's emergency committee.

In an agreement with FIFA last September, the Azeri government had promised to allow its Football Association (AFFA) to conduct its business unhindered. But FIFA spokesman Andreas Herren said the government was still interfering, shutting down AFFA's offices, taking away working materials and launching an investigation into allegations of tax fraud.

Herren added: "It's clear the government isn't happy with the association. But whenever you want to change who is at the helm it needs to be done in a democratic way. The only way to deal with the situation and bring things back to normal was to suspend the association."

'If Azerbaijan's results are expunged, Wales would lose six points and a plus-six goal difference'

Italy edged up into second place in the group after Christian Vieri goals earned a 2-0 home win over Finland. The result further revived the command of coach Giovanni Trapattoni, which had been fragile, to say the least, after the World Cup.

In **Group 1**, holders France maintained their 100 per cent record with a resounding 6-0 win against Malta then a 2-1 victory over Israel in Palermo in Sicily. That gave them a potentially decisive nine-point lead over Slovenia. However, the European champions were made to work hard by Israel after falling behind to an early goal.

The Slovenians moved into second place on six points and appear favourites to gain a play-off spot after an impressive 4-1 home win against Cyprus, whose coach, Momcilo Vukotic, quit the next day.

Israel and Cyprus are two points further back, with the Israelis kicking themselves after being held 1-1 on the island. Malta remain bottom without a point.

In **Group 2**, suggestions that the Romanian federation hire a witch to put a spell on the Danish goalkeeper did not quite work as expected. The Danes won 5-2 in Bucharest but then, remarkably, lost 2-0 at home to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Norway emerged from the confusion to take a three-point lead over Denmark at the top of the group following their 2-0 win in Luxembourg.

The Czech Republic maintained their narrow lead at the top of **Group 3** from Holland after two-goal Jan Koller inspired a sparkling 4-0 win against 10-men Austria in Prague. On the same night, Holland hit back from being a goal down to win 2-1 in point-less Moldova. Marc Van Bommel scored the late winner. Four days earlier the top two had drawn 1-1 in Rotterdam.

Swedes move up a gear

Poland drew level with **Group 4** leaders Latvia on seven points after a comfortable 5-0 home win over minnows San Marino. However, Sweden, like Latvia with a game in hand, moved within two points of the joint leaders by winning 2-1 in Hungary on two goals from lively Marcus Allback.

Scotland went top of the **Group 5** table only to slip off again. They took pole position following a 2-1 home win over Iceland – defender Lee Wilkie snatching the winner – while Germany were surprisingly held 1-1 at home by Lithuania. The Scots then lost 1-0 away to Lithuania, which allowed the Baltic side to join Scotland and Germany on seven points.

Spain bobbled along at the top of **Group 6** and could have been even further clear had they not allowed second-placed Ukraine to hit back late on through Olexandr Horshkov for a 2-2 draw in Kyiv. Spain then extended their lead to four points after Diego Tristan scored the goal that broke the deadlock for a 3-0 win over Armenia in Leon.

Greece revived their hopes of a play-off place after goals from Angelos Haristeas earned a 2-0 win away to the nine men of Northern Ireland.

In **Group 7**, Wayne Rooney, the Everton 17-year-old, snatched the individual glory, first by enlivening the closing stages of England's 2-0 win in Liechtenstein then by leading the line in superb style right from the start of a 2-0 win over Turkey in Sunderland. Goals from Darius Vassell and David Beckham (penalty) sent England top of the table.

Slovakia secured their first points and moved into third place with a 2-0 win away to Macedonia and 4-0 home win, helped by two goals from Szilard Nemeth, over Liechtenstein.

In **Group 8**, leaders Bulgaria lost their 100 per cent record after a goalless draw in Estonia, for whom keeper Mart Poom was outstanding. Croatia moved into second place, three points behind, after beating Belgium 4-0 and bottom side Andorra 2-0.

Switzerland extended their lead at the top of **Group 10** to two points after a goalless draw in Georgia, who recorded their first point in qualifying action just as coach Alexander Chivadze was confirming his impending resignation.

Albania sprang one of the surprises of the entire competition by defeating Russia 3-1 in Shkoder to provide new boss Hans-Peter Briegel, the former German World Cup defender, with a winning start. His side stayed in third place after a 0-0 home draw with the Republic of Ireland.

The Irish scored their first competitive victory under Brian Kerr when they won 2-1 in Georgia, who were then ordered to play their next match behind closed doors after a knife, thrown from the crowd, struck Ireland's Kevin Kilbane.

Keir Radnedge

EURO 2004 QUALIFIERS

Group 1

Mar 29 - Limassol
Cyprus 1 (Rauffmann 61)
Israel 1 (Afek 2)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 8,500. **Ref:** McCurry (Sco)
Cyprus: N Panayiotou - Okkarides, Ioakim (N Nicolaou 46; Daskalakis 77), Konnafis, Spyrou, Theodotou, Engomitis (Rauffmann 58), Kaiafas, Tomic, M Constantinou, Okkas.
Israel: Awat - Benado, Ben-Haim, Keisi, Harazi, Banin, Badir (Abuksis 85), Tal, Afek (Benayoun 72), Zandberg (Nimni 62), Revivo.

Mar 29 - Lens
France 6 (Wiltord 37, Henry 39, 54, Zidane pen 57, 80, Trezeguet 71)
Malta 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 40,775. **Ref:** Bozinovski (Mac)
France: Barthez - Thuram (Sagnol 66), Gallas, Silvestre, Lizarazu, Pedretti, Makelele, Wiltord (Govou 75), Zidane, Trezeguet, Henry (Rothen 81).
Malta: Muscat - Ciantar, Mamo (Chetcuti 71), Carabott, Said, Dimech, Bogdanovic (Turner 62), Vella, Michael Mifsud, Mallia, Nwoko.

Apr 2 - Palermo, Italy
Israel 1 (Afek 2)
France 2 (Trezeguet 23, Zidane 45)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Barber (Eng)
Israel: Awat - Harazi, Benado, Ben-Haim, Keisi, Afek, Banin (Benayoun 74), Torjman (Zandberg 46), Tal (Badir 56), Abuksis, Revivo.
France: Barthez - Thuram, Gallas, Silvestre, Lizarazu, Vieira, Makelele, Wiltord (Govou 66), Zidane, Trezeguet (Cisse 73), Henry.

Apr 2 - Ljubljana
Slovenia 4 (Siljak 5, 14, Zahovic pen 39, N Ceh 43)
Cyprus 1 (M Constantinou 10)
HT: 4-1. **Att:** 5,000. **Ref:** Gomes Costa (Por)
Slovenia: Simeunovic - Cipot, Vugdalic, Bulajic, Karic, Sukalo, N Ceh (Zlogar 90), Zahovic, Koren (Rudonja 85), Pavlin, Siljak (Rakovic 90).
Cyprus: N Panayiotou - Konnafis (Ioakim 46), Daskalakis, Spyrou (G Constantinou 75), Theodotou, Tomic, Okkas, Kaiafas, M Constantinou, Okkarides, Rauffmann (Charalambidis 64).

GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	5	5	0	0	19	2	15
Slovenia	3	2	0	1	7	6	6
Israel	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
Cyprus	4	1	1	2	5	8	4
Malta	5	0	0	5	1	17	0

07.09.02 .....Cyprus-France 1-2
07.09.02 .....Slovenia-Malta 3-0
12.10.02 .....France-Slovenia 5-0
12.10.02 .....Malta-Israel 0-2
16.10.02 .....Malta-France 0-4
20.11.02 .....Cyprus-Malta 2-1
29.03.03 .....Cyprus-Israel 1-1
29.03.03 .....France-Malta 6-0
02.04.03 .....Israel-France 1-2
02.04.03 .....Slovenia-Cyprus 4-1
30.04.03 .....Israel-Cyprus
30.04.03 .....Malta-Slovenia
07.06.03 .....Israel-Slovenia
07.06.03 .....Malta-Cyprus
06.09.03 .....France-Cyprus
06.09.03 .....Slovenia-Israel
10.09.03 .....Israel-Malta
10.09.03 .....Slovenia-France
11.10.03 .....Cyprus-Slovenia
11.10.03 .....France-Israel

Group 2

Mar 29 - Zenica
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Bolic 53, Barbarez 79)
Luxembourg 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Hyytia (Fin)
Bosnia: Hasagic - Biscevic (Berberovic 68), Konjic, Alihodzic, Bajramovic, Bolic (Turkovic 81), Beslija (Hrgovic 79), Baljic, Grujic, Music, Barbarez.
Luxembourg: Besic - Peters, Hoffmann, Strasser, Federspiel, Schauls, Remy, Molitor, Christophe (Huss 85), Braun (Schneider 88), Leweck (Di Domenico 77).

Mar 29 - Bucharest
Romania 2 (Mutu 5, D Munteanu 47)
Denmark 5 (Rommedahl 9, 90, Gravesen 53, Tomasson 72, Contra og 74)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 55,000. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Romania: Lobont - Contra, Gheorghe Popescu, Chivu, Filipescu, Codrea (Reghecampf 62), Radoi, D Munteanu, Pancu (Bratu 68), Ganea, Mutu.
Denmark: Sorensen - Rytter (Michaelsen 35), Laursen, Henriksen, N Jensen, Poulsen (Wieghorst 67), Gravesen, Rommedahl, Lovenkrands (Martin Jorgensen 46), Tomasson, Sand.

Apr 2 - Copenhagen
Denmark 0
Bosnia-Herzegovina 2 (Barbarez 23, Baljic 29)
HT: 0-2. **Att:** 30,845. **Ref:** Stredak (Slk)
Denmark: Sorensen - Michaelsen, Henriksen, Albrechtsen, N Jensen (P Frandsen 81), C Jensen (Wieghorst 60), Gravesen, Rommedahl, Tomasson (Berg 85), Martin Jorgensen, Sand.
Bosnia: Hasagic - Berberovic, Music, Konjic, Bajramovic, Hibic, Beslija (Mulina 84), Biscevic, Barbarez, Hrgovic (Grujic 67), Baljic (Blatniak 77).

Apr 2 - Luxembourg
Luxembourg 0
Norway 2 (Rushfeldt 58, Solskjaer 73)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 3,000. **Ref:** Dobrinov (Bul)
Luxembourg: Besic - Peters, Hoffmann, Schauls, Federspiel, Molitor, Leweck (Lassine 90), Braun (Schneider 76), Strasser, Remy, Christophe (Huss 83).
Norway: Olsen - Basma, H Berg, R Johnsen, Bergdolmo, Rudi (Tessem 46), Andersen, E Bakke (Svindal Larsen 86), Riise, Solskjaer, Flo (Rushfeldt 46).

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Norway	4	3	1	0	7	2	10
Denmark	4	2	1	1	9	6	7
Romania	4	2	0	2	12	6	6
Bosnia-Herz	4	2	0	2	4	5	6
Luxembourg	4	0	0	4	0	13	0

07.09.02 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Romania 0-3
07.09.02 .....Norway-Denmark 2-2
12.10.02 .....Denmark-Luxembourg 2-0
12.10.02 .....Romania-Norway 0-1
16.10.02 .....Luxembourg-Romania 0-7
16.10.02 .....Norway-Bosnia-Herzegovina 2-0
29.03.03 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Luxembourg ..2-0
29.03.03 .....Romania-Denmark 2-5
02.04.03 .....Denmark-Bosnia-Herzegovina 0-2
02.04.03 .....Luxembourg-Norway 0-2
07.06.03 .....Denmark-Norway
07.06.03 .....Romania-Bosnia-Herzegovina
11.06.03 .....Luxembourg-Denmark
11.06.03 .....Norway-Romania
06.09.03 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Norway
06.09.03 .....Romania-Luxembourg
10.09.03 .....Denmark-Romania
10.09.03 .....Luxembourg-Bosnia-Herzegovina
11.10.03 .....Bosnia-Herzegovina-Denmark
11.10.03 .....Norway-Luxembourg

Group 3

Mar 29 - Minsk
Belarus 2 (Kutuzov 43, Gurenko 58)
Moldova 1 (Cebotari 14)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 7,500. **Ref:** Verbist (Blg)
Belarus: Tumilovich - Omelyanchuk, Kulchy, Ostrovski, Lavrik, Gurenko, Hleb (Romaschenko 80), Bialkevich, Shuneiko, Khatskevich, Kutuzov (Kovba 88).
Moldova: Hmaruc - Olexic, Catinsus, Priganiuc, Covalenco, Testemitanu, Rebeja, Rogaciov (Popovic 25; Berco 62), Covalciuc, Cebotari (Golban 79), Clescenco.

Mar 29 - Rotterdam
Holland 1 (Van Nistelrooy 45)
Czech Republic 1 (Koller 68)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 51,180. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Holland: Waterreus - Ricksen, F De Boer, Stam, Van Bronckhorst (Van der Vaart 39), Seedorf, Van Bommel, Davids, Zenden, Kluivert, Van Nistelrooy (Makaay 81).
Czech Rep: Cech - Grygera, Bolf, Ujfalusi, Jankulovski, Poborsky, Galasek, Rosicky (Baros 68), Smicer (Jiranek 79), Nedved, Koller (Lokvenc 88).

Apr 2 - Prague
Czech Republic 4 (Nedved 19, Koller 32, 62, Jankulovski pen 56)
Austria 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 20,000. **Ref:** Lopez Nieto (Spa)
Czech Rep: Cech - Grygera, Bolf, Ujfalusi, Jankulovski, Poborsky, Galasek, Nedved (Vachousek 74), Smicer (Rosicky 62), Koller (Lokvenc 79), Baros.
Austria: Mandl - Scharner, Stranzl, Hieblinger, Pogatetz, Schopp, Aufhauser, Flogel (Wagner 46), Weissenberger, Herzog (Kovacevic 53), Haas (Dospel 62). *Sent off: Kovacevic 55min.*

Apr 2 - Tiraspol
Moldova 1 (Boret 16)
Holland 2 (Van Nistelrooy 37, Van Bommel 85)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 12,000. **Ref:** Sars (Fra)
Moldova: Hmaruc - Covalenco, Olexic, Testemitanu, Catinsus, Priganiuc, Covalciuc (Berco 80), Ivanov, Boret, Cebotari (Pogreban 88), Clescenco (Golban 64).
Holland: Waterreus - Reiziger, Stam (Ricksen 64), F De Boer, Zenden, Seedorf (R De Boer 66), Van Bommel, Davids, Van der Vaart (Van Hooijdonk 75), Van Nistelrooy, Kluivert.

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Czech Republic	4	3	1	0	9	1	10
Holland	4	3	1	0	9	2	10
Austria	4	2	0	2	4	7	6
Belarus	4	1	0	3	2	8	3
Moldova	4	0	0	4	2	8	0

07.09.02 .....Austria-Moldova 2-0
07.09.02 .....Holland-Belarus 3-0
12.10.02 .....Belarus-Austria 0-2
12.10.02 .....Moldova-Czech Republic 0-2
16.10.02 .....Austria-Holland 0-3
16.10.02 .....Czech Republic-Belarus 2-0
29.03.03 .....Belarus-Moldova 2-1
29.03.03 .....Holland-Czech Republic 1-1
02.04.03 .....Czech Republic-Austria 4-0
02.04.03 .....Moldova-Holland 1-2
07.06.03 .....Belarus-Holland
07.06.03 .....Moldova-Austria
11.06.03 .....Austria-Belarus
11.06.03 .....Czech Republic-Moldova
06.09.03 .....Belarus-Czech Republic
06.09.03 .....Holland-Austria
10.09.03 .....Czech Republic-Holland
10.09.03 .....Moldova-Belarus
11.10.03 .....Austria-Czech Republic
11.10.03 .....Holland-Moldova

Group 4

Mar 29 - Chorzow
Poland 0
Hungary 0
Att: 48,000. **Ref:** De Santis (Ita)
Poland: Dudek - J Bak, Hajto, Stolarczyk, Szymkowiak, Kaluzny, Swierczewski, Kosowski, Zajac (Dawidowski 71), Kuzba, Olisadebe.
Hungary: Kiraly - C Feher, Urban, Dragoner, Juhar, Lipcsei, Dardai, Lisztes, Low, Tokoli (Boor 84), Kenesei (J Sebok 69).

Apr 2 - Budapest
Hungary 1 (Lisztes 65)
Sweden 2 (Allback 34, 66)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 28,000. **Ref:** Cortez Batista (Por)
Hungary: Kiraly - C Feher, Urban (Bodnar 61), Dragoner, Juhar, Lipcsei (Boor 80), Dardai, Lisztes, Low, Tokoli (J Sebok 68), Kenesei.
Sweden: Isaksson - Lucic, Mellberg, Michael Svensson, Edman, Mjallby, Andreas Andersson, A Svensson (Kallstrom 61), Ljungberg, Allback (M Jonson 90), Larsson.

Apr 2 - Ostrowiec Swietokrzyski
Poland 5 (Szymkowiak 4, Kosowski 27, Kuzba 55, 90, Karwan 82)
San Marino 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 8,500. **Ref:** Loizou (Cyp)
Poland: Dudek - J Bak (Wasilewski 63), Zielinski, Sznaucner, Zajac (Karwan 46), Szymkowiak, Burkhardt, Kosowski, Zurawski, Olisadebe (Krzynowek 40), Kuzba.
San Marino: F Gasperoni - Albani, S Bacciocchi, Matteoni, Zonzini (B Gasperoni 69), Moretti, Michele Marani, Muccioli, Vannucci, Montagna (De Luigi 76), A Selva (Ugolini 90).

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Latvia	3	2	1	0	2	0	7
Poland	4	2	1	1	7	1	7
Sweden	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Hungary	4	1	2	1	5	3	5
San Marino	4	0	0	4	0	11	0

07.09.02 .....Latvia-Sweden 0-0
07.09.02 .....San Marino-Poland 0-2
12.10.02 .....Poland-Latvia 0-1
12.10.02 .....Sweden-Hungary 1-1
16.10.02 .....Hungary-San Marino 3-0
20.11.02 .....San Marino-Latvia 0-1
29.03.03 .....Poland-Hungary 0-0
02.04.03 .....Hungary-Sweden 1-2
02.04.03 .....Poland-San Marino 5-0
30.04.03 .....Latvia-San Marino
07.06.03 .....Hungary-Latvia
07.06.03 .....San Marino-Sweden
11.06.03 .....San Marino-Hungary
11.06.03 .....Sweden-Poland
06.09.03 .....Latvia-Poland
06.09.03 .....Sweden-San Marino
10.09.03 .....Latvia-Hungary
10.09.03 .....Poland-Sweden
11.10.03 .....Hungary-Poland
11.10.03 .....Sweden-Latvia

Group 5

Mar 29 - Nurnberg
Germany 1 (Ramelow 8)
Lithuania 1 (Razanauskas 73)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 40,754. **Ref:** Esquinas Torres (Spa)
Germany: Kahn - Frings, Friedrich, Worns, Rau (Freier 82), Schneider, Ramelow, Hamann, Bohme (Rehmer 46), Klose, Bobic (Kuranyi 72).
Lithuania: Stauce - Semberas, Zvirgzdauskas, Dedura, Barasa, Morinas, Petrenka (Dziaukstas 87), Pukelevicius (Maciulevicius 46), Mikalajunas, Razanauskas, Jankauskas (Fomenka 90).

Mar 29 - Glasgow
Scotland 2 (K Miller 12, Wilkie 70)
Iceland 1 (E Gudjohnsen 48)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 37,548. **Ref:** Temmink (Hol)
Scotland: Douglas - Wilkie, Pressley, Dailly, G Alexander, Ferguson, Lambert, Hutchison (Devlin 66), Naysmith, K Miller (McNamara 82), Crawford.
Iceland: Arason - Thorsteinsson, L O Sigurdsson, Bergsson, Gunnarsson (T Gudjonsson 74), R Kristinsson, J K Gudjonsson, Ingimarsson, Vidarsson (I Sigurdsson 83), E Gudjohnsen (T Gudmundsson 89), Gretarsson.

Apr 2 - Kaunas
Lithuania 1 (Razanauskas pen 75)
Scotland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Stuchlik (Aut)
Lithuania: Stauce - Semberas, Gleveckas, Zvirgzdauskas, Dedura, Barasa, Morinas, Mikalajunas (Buitkus 89), Petrenka (Maciulevicius 70), Razanauskas, Jankauskas (Fomenka 63).
Scotland: Gallacher - Dailly, Pressley, Wilkie, G Alexander, McNamara (Gray 78), Lambert, Hutchison (Cameron 84), Naysmith, Crawford (Devlin 56), K Miller.

GROUP 5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	3	2	1	0	5	2	7
Lithuania	5	2	1	2	4	6	7
Scotland	4	2	1	1	6	4	7
Iceland	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
Faroe Islands	3	0	1	2	3	6	1

07.09.02 .....Faroe Islands-Scotland 2-2
07.09.02 .....Lithuania-Germany 0-2
12.10.02 .....Iceland-Scotland 0-2
12.10.02 .....Lithuania-Faroe Islands 2-0
16.10.02 .....Germany-Faroe Islands 2-1
16.10.02 .....Iceland-Lithuania 3-0
29.03.03 .....Germany-Lithuania 1-1
29.03.03 .....Scotland-Iceland 2-1
02.04.03 .....Lithuania-Scotland 1-0
07.06.03 .....Iceland-Faroe Islands
07.06.03 .....Scotland-Germany
11.06.03 .....Faroe Islands-Germany
11.06.03 .....Lithuania-Iceland
20.08.03 .....Faroe Islands-Iceland
06.09.03 .....Iceland-Germany
06.09.03 .....Scotland-Faroe Islands
10.09.03 .....Faroe Islands-Lithuania
10.09.03 .....Germany-Scotland
11.10.03 .....Germany-Iceland
11.10.03 .....Scotland-Lithuania

Group 6

Mar 29 - Yerevan
Armenia 1 (Petrosyan 86)
Northern Ireland 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 10,321. **Ref:** Beck (Lie)
Armenia: Berezovski - Vardanyan, Hovsepyan, Bilibio, Sarkisyan (Artur Mkrtchyan 90), Voskanyan, K Dokhoyan, Melikyan, Petrosyan (Mkhitaryan 90), Artavazd Karamian (Agvan Mkrtchyan 89), Arman Karamian.
N Ireland: Taylor - A Hughes, Williams, Craigan, McCann, Gillespie, Lomas, Johnson, McVeigh, Healy, Quinn (Elliott 70).

Mar 29 - Kyiv
Ukraine 2 (Voronin 11, Horshkov 90)
Spain 2 (Raul 83, Etxeberria 87)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 82,000. **Ref:** Riley (Eng)
Ukraine: Shovkovskyi - Nesmachnyi, Kormiltsev (Kalinichenko 62), Fedorov, Dmytrulin, Voronin, Husin, Tymoshchuk, Horshkov, Shevchenko (Serebrennikov 67), Vorobei.
Spain: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Marchena, Cesar, Aranzabal, Albelda (Xavi 65), Baraja, Etxeberria, Guti (Valeron 65), Vicente (Diego Tristan 77), Raul.

Apr 2 - Belfast
Northern Ireland 0
Greece 2 (Haristeas 3, 56)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 7,196. **Ref:** Gilewski (Pol)
N Ireland: Taylor - A Hughes, Williams, Craigan, McCartney, Gillespie, Lomas, Johnson, McCann (McVeigh 68), Quinn, Healy (Kirk 68). *Sent off: Quinn 39min, Gillespie 69min.*
Greece: Nikopolidis - Dabizas, K Konstantinidis, Kyrgiakos, Giannakopoulos, Zagorakis, Tsartas (Kafes 75), Karagounis, Venetidis (Fissas 72), Haristeas, Nikolaidis (Vryzas 42).

Apr 2 - Leon
Spain 3 (Diego Tristan 62, Ivan Helguera 68, Joaquin 90)
Armenia 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 13,500. **Ref:** Yefet (Isr)
Spain: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Ivan Helguera, Marchena, Raul Bravo, Albelda, Xavi (Vicente 54), Etxeberria (Joaquin 42), Raul, Valeron (Baraja 64), Diego Tristan.
Armenia: Berezovski - Vardanyan, Hovsepyan, Dokhoyan, Melikyan, Sarkisyan, Voskanyan, Petrosyan (Mkhitaryan 81), Hachatryan (Minasyan 84), Artavazd Karamian (Bilibio 90), Arman Karamian.

GROUP 6

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	4	3	1	0	10	2	10
Ukraine	4	1	3	0	6	4	6
Greece	4	2	0	2	4	4	6
Armenia	4	1	1	2	3	7	4
Northern Ireland	4	0	1	3	0	6	1

07.09.02 .....Armenia-Ukraine 2-2
07.09.02 .....Greece-Spain 0-2
12.10.02 .....Spain-Northern Ireland 3-0
12.10.02 .....Ukraine-Greece 2-0
16.10.02 .....Greece-Armenia 2-0
16.10.02 .....Northern Ireland-Ukraine 0-0
29.03.03 .....Armenia-Northern Ireland 1-0
29.03.03 .....Ukraine-Spain 2-2
02.04.03 .....Northern Ireland-Greece 0-2
02.04.03 .....Spain-Armenia 3-0
07.06.03 .....Spain-Greece
07.06.03 .....Ukraine-Armenia
11.06.03 .....Greece-Ukraine
11.06.03 .....Northern Ireland-Spain
06.09.03 .....Armenia-Greece
06.09.03 .....Ukraine-Northern Ireland
10.09.03 .....Northern Ireland-Armenia
10.09.03 .....Spain-Ukraine
11.10.03 .....Armenia-Spain
11.10.03 .....Greece-Northern Ireland

Group 7

Mar 29 - Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
England 2 (Owen 28, Beckham 53)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 3,548. **Ref:** Kasnaferis (Gre)
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Telser, D Hasler, Michael Stocklasa, D'Elia, Gerster, Martin Stocklasa, Zech (F Burgmeier 62), Frick (T Nigg 82), T Beck, R Buchel (M Beck 86).
England: James - G Neville, Ferdinand, Southgate, Bridge, Beckham (Murphy 70), Gerrard (Butt 66), Scholes, Dyer, Heskey (Rooney 80), Owen.

Mar 29 - Skopje
Macedonia 0
Slovakia 2 (M Petras 28, Reiter 90)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 11,000. **Ref:** Duhamel (Fra)
Macedonia: Milosevski - Braga, Sedloski, I Mitreski, Lazarevski (Stojkov 83), Pandev, Sumulikoski (Naumoski 52), Jancevski, M Krstev, S Krstev (Grozdanovski 62), Sakiri.
Slovakia: Konig - Klimpl, M Petras, Hlinka, Leitner, Janocko, Karhan (Hanek 90), Demo (B Labant 82), Michalik, S Nemeth (Reiter 76), Vittek.

Apr 2 - Sunderland
England 2 (Vassell 76, Beckham pen 90)
Turkey 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 47,667. **Ref:** Meier (Swi)
England: James - G Neville, Ferdinand, Campbell, Bridge, Butt, Beckham, Scholes, Gerrard, Owen (Vassell 57), Rooney (Dyer 88).
Turkey: Rustu - Fatih Akyel (Hakan Sukur 79), Alpay, Bulent, Ergun, Okan (Umit Davala 58), Basturk (Hasan Sas 69), Tugay, Emre Belozoglu, Ilhan, Nihat.

Apr 2 - Trnava
Slovakia 4 (Reiter 19, S Nemeth 51, 64, Janocko 90)
Liechtenstein 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ceferin (Sln)
Match played behind closed doors
Slovakia: Konig - Klimpl, M Petras, Hlinka, Leitner, Janocko, Karhan, Demo (B Labant 63), Michalik (Mintal 82), Reiter, Kozlej (S Nemeth 46).
Liechtenstein: Jehle - Telser, D Hasler, Michael Stocklasa, D'Elia, M Frick (T Nigg 60), Martin Stocklasa, F Burgmeier, Gerster (Ospelt 85), T Beck, R Buchel (Gigon 71).

GROUP 7

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	4	3	1	0	8	3	10
Turkey	4	3	0	1	10	3	9
Slovakia	4	2	0	2	7	5	6
Macedonia	4	0	2	2	4	7	2
Liechtenstein	4	0	1	3	1	12	1

07.09.02 .....Turkey-Slovakia 3-0
08.09.02 .....Liechtenstein-Macedonia 1-1
12.10.02 .....Macedonia-Turkey 1-2
12.10.02 .....Slovakia-England 1-2
16.10.02 .....England-Macedonia 2-2
16.10.02 .....Turkey-Liechtenstein 5-0
29.03.03 .....Liechtenstein-England 0-2
29.03.03 .....Macedonia-Slovakia 0-2
02.04.03 .....England-Turkey 2-0
02.04.03 .....Slovakia-Liechtenstein 4-0
07.06.03 .....Macedonia-Liechtenstein
07.06.03 .....Slovakia-Turkey
11.06.03 .....England-Slovakia
11.06.03 .....Turkey-Macedonia
06.09.03 .....Liechtenstein-Turkey
06.09.03 .....Macedonia-England
10.09.03 .....England-Liechtenstein
10.09.03 .....Slovakia-Macedonia
11.10.03 .....Liechtenstein-Slovakia
11.10.03 .....Turkey-England

Group 8

Mar 29 - Zagreb
Croatia 4 (Srna 9, Prso 55, T Maric 70, J Leko 76)
Belgium 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Fandel (Ger)
Croatia: Pletikosa - D Simic, Simunic, R Kovac, Zivkovic, Rapajic, Tudor (N Kovac 77), Srna, Rosso (J Leko 46), Prso (Stanic 71), T Maric.
Belgium: Vandendriessche - De Cock (Deflandre 56), Valgaeren (Van Damme 67), Van Buyten, P Van der Heyden, Buffel, Simons, Englebert (Baseggio 55), Goor, Sonck, E Mpenza.

Apr 2 - Varazdin
Croatia 2 (Rapajic pen 10, 43)
Andorra 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 8,500. **Ref:** Salomir (Rom)
Croatia: Pletikosa - D Simic, Simunic (N Kovac 46), R Kovac, Tudor, Zivkovic, Rapajic (Babic 65), J Leko, Prso, Srna, T Maric (Stanic 46).
Andorra: Koldo - Ayala, Txema, Jonas, Fernandez, Sonejee, E Gonzalez (Motwani 90), Pujol, Pol Perez (Lucendo 84), Jimenez (Escura 54), J Sanchez.

Apr 2 - Tallinn
Estonia 0
Bulgaria 0
Att: 4,000. **Ref:** Plautz (Aut)
Estonia: Poom - Allas, Lemsalu, Jaager, U Rooba, Leetma, Haavistu (Reinumae 63), Kristal, Zelinski (Viikmae 57), Oper, Terehhov.
Bulgaria: Zdravkov - Kishishev, Pazin, I Petkov, Kirilov, Stilian Petrov, Peev, Balakov, M Petrov (M Petkov 72), Berbatov, Jankovic (Todorov 46).

GROUP 8

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bulgaria	4	3	1	0	6	1	10
Croatia	4	2	1	1	6	2	7
Belgium	4	2	0	2	2	6	6
Estonia	3	0	2	1	0	1	2
Andorra	3	0	0	3	1	5	0

07.09.02 .....Belgium-Bulgaria 0-2
07.09.02 .....Croatia-Estonia 0-0
12.10.02 .....Andorra-Belgium 0-1
12.10.02 .....Bulgaria-Croatia 2-0
16.10.02 .....Bulgaria-Andorra 2-1
16.10.02 .....Estonia-Belgium 0-1
29.03.03 .....Croatia-Belgium 4-0
02.04.03 .....Croatia-Andorra 2-0
02.04.03 .....Estonia-Bulgaria 0-0
30.04.03 .....Andorra-Estonia
07.06.03 .....Bulgaria-Belgium
07.06.03 .....Estonia-Andorra
11.06.03 .....Belgium-Andorra
11.06.03 .....Estonia-Croatia
06.09.03 .....Andorra-Croatia
06.09.03 .....Bulgaria-Estonia
10.09.03 .....Andorra-Bulgaria
10.09.03 .....Belgium-Croatia
11.10.03 .....Belgium-Estonia
11.10.03 .....Croatia-Bulgaria

Group 9

Mar 29 - Palermo
Italy 2 (Vieri 5, 23)
Finland 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 34,074. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Italy: Buffon - Panucci, Nesta, Cannavaro, Zambrotta, Perrotta, Zanetti, Camoranesi, Totti (Miccoli 86), Delvecchio (Birindelli 69), Vieri (Corradi 81).
Finland: A Niemi - Pasanen, Hyypia, Tihinen, Saarinen, Nurmela (Kopteff 76), Ilola, Riihilahti (Johansson 36), Kolkka (Kuqi 89), Tainio, Forssell.

Mar 29 - Cardiff
Wales 4 (Bellamy 1, Speed 40, Hartson 44, Giggs 52)
Azerbaijan 0
HT: 3-0. **Att:** 72,500. **Ref:** Leuba (Swi)
Wales: P Jones - Davies, Melville, Page, Speed (Trollope 45), Bellamy (Edwards 71), Oster, Pembridge, Savage (C Robinson 19), Giggs, Hartson.
Azerbaijan: Gasanzade - Akhmedov, Emin Guliev (Yadullayev 46), S Aliev (Tagizade 78), Imamaliyev, K Guliev, R Mamedov, Hajiyev (F Mamedov 46), M Gurbanov, R Musaev, G Gurbanov.

GROUP 9

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wales	4	4	0	0	10	1	12
Italy	4	2	1	1	6	3	7
Serbia & M'negro	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
Finland	4	1	0	3	3	6	3
Azerbaijan	5	0	1	4	2	13	1

07.09.02 .....Azerbaijan-Italy 0-2
07.09.02 .....Finland-Wales 0-2
12.10.02 .....Finland-Azerbaijan 3-0
12.10.02 .....Italy-Serbia & Montenegro* 1-1
16.10.02 .....Wales-Italy 2-1
16.10.02 .....Serbia & Montenegro*-Finland 2-0
20.11.02 .....Azerbaijan-Wales 0-2
12.02.03 .....Serbia & Montenegro-Azerbaijan....2-2
29.03.03 .....Italy-Finland 2-0
29.03.03 .....Wales-Azerbaijan 4-0
07.06.03 .....Finland-Serbia & Montenegro
11.06.03 .....Azerbaijan-Serbia & Montenegro
11.06.03 .....Finland-Italy
20.08.03 .....Serbia & Montenegro-Wales
06.09.03 .....Azerbaijan-Finland
06.09.03 .....Italy-Wales
10.09.03 .....Serbia & Montenegro-Italy
10.09.03 .....Wales-Finland
11.10.03 .....Italy-Azerbaijan
11.10.03 .....Wales-Serbia & Montenegro
**Serbia & Montenegro played first two qualifiers as Yugoslavia*

Group 10

Mar 29 - Shkoder
Albania 3 (Rraklli 20, Lala 79, Tare 82)
Russia 1 (Karyaka 77)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 16,000. **Ref:** Allaerts (Blg)
Albania: Strakosha - E Beqiri, Cipi, Aliaj, K Duro, Lala, Hasi, Murati (Bellai 68), Skela (Dede 84), Rraklli (Myrtaj 70), Tare.
Russia: Ovchinnikov - Nizhegorodov, Ignashevich, Berezutsky, Gusev (Beschastnykh 55), Aldonin, Smertin (Yanovsky 73), Tochilin (Karyaka 46), Loskov, Semak, Kerzhakov.

Mar 29 - Tbilisi
Georgia 1 (Kobiashvili 61)
Rep Ireland 2 (Duff 18, Doherty 84)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 15,000. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)
Georgia: Lomaia - Khizaneishvili, Shashiashvili, Amisulashvili, Nemsadze, Tskitishvili, Dzhamarauli, Kinkladze (Didava 70), Kobiashvili, Ketsbaia (Demetradze 46), Iashvili.
Rep Ireland: Given - Carr, Breen, Cunningham, O'Shea, Carsley, Kinsella, Holland, Kilbane, Doherty, Duff.

Apr 2 - Tirana
Albania 0
Rep Ireland 0
Att: 20,000. **Ref:** Farina (Ita)
Albania: Strakosha - E Beqiri, Cipi, Aliaj, K Duro, Lala, Hasi, Skela (Bushi 86), Murati (Bellai 67), Tare, Rraklli (Myrtaj 69).
Rep Ireland: Given - Carr, Cunningham, Breen, O'Shea, Carsley, Kinsella, Holland, Kilbane, Duff, Robbie Keane (Doherty 67).

Apr 2 - Tbilisi
Georgia 0
Switzerland 0
Att: 10,000. **Ref:** Trivkovic (Cro)
Georgia: Lomaia - Khizanishvili, Khizaneishvili, Kemoklidze, Tskitishvili, Nemsadze (Didava 46), Rekhviashvili, Kobiashvili, Kvirkvelia, Iashvili (S Arveladze 46), Demetradze (Ashvetia 72).
Switzerland: Zuberbuhler - Haas, M Yakin, P Muller, Berner, Cabanas (Cantaluppi 68), Vogel, Wicky, H Yakin (Thurre 90), Frei (Celestini 59), Chapuisat.

GROUP 10

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Switzerland	4	2	2	0	7	3	8
Russia	3	2	0	1	9	6	6
Albania	4	1	2	1	5	6	5
Rep Ireland	4	1	1	2	5	7	4
Georgia	3	0	1	2	2	6	1

07.09.02 .....Russia-Rep Ireland 4-2
08.09.02 .....Switzerland-Georgia 4-1
12.10.02 .....Albania-Switzerland 1-1
16.10.02 .....Rep Ireland-Switzerland 1-2
16.10.02 .....Russia-Albania 4-1
29.03.03 .....Albania-Russia 3-1
29.03.03 .....Georgia-Rep Ireland 1-2
02.04.03 .....Albania-Rep Ireland 0-0
02.04.03 .....Georgia-Switzerland 0-0
30.04.03 .....Georgia-Russia
07.06.03 .....Rep Ireland-Albania
07.06.03 .....Switzerland-Russia
11.06.03 .....Rep Ireland-Georgia
11.06.03 .....Switzerland-Albania
06.09.03 .....Georgia-Albania
06.09.03 .....Rep Ireland-Russia
10.09.03 .....Albania-Georgia
10.09.03 .....Russia-Switzerland
11.10.03 .....Russia-Georgia
11.10.03 .....Switzerland-Rep Ireland

- The 10 group winners qualify for the finals automatically; the 10 runners-up will play-off in five head-to-head, home and away ties, the winners of which also qualify.
- Qualifying play-off dates: Nov 15, 2003; Nov 19, 2003.
- Portugal qualify automatically for the finals as hosts.

INTERNATIONALS

Thursday, March 27

Mar 27 - Tunis - Tunisia four-nation tnmt semi
Cameroon 2 (Eto'o 15, Job 43)
Madagascar 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Zahmoul (Tun)
Cameroon: Kameni - Mettomo, Tchato (Felami), Song, Atouba (Wome), Olembe (Mezague), Geremi, Eto'o, Mbami, Job (N'Diefi), Djemba-Djemba (Ndoumbe).
Madagascar: Rajaozara - Radafisou, Collet, Anly, Radona, Menakely, Rakotondraibe (Raharison), Randiandelisu, Rjaobary (Rasmialona), M Razafindrakoto, E Razafindrakoto.

Mar 27 - Krusevac - friendly
Serbia & Montenegro 1 (D Kovacevic 29)
Bulgaria 2 (Stilian Petrov 14, Todorov 56)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 10,000. **Ref:** Lazarevski (Mac)
Serbia & Montenegro: Jevric (Zilic 46) - Mirkovic, Gavrancic, Malbasa, Trobok (N Brnovic 62), N Kovacevic (Duljaj 77), Dragutinovic, D Stankovic (N Djordjevic 83), Vukic (Lazetic 46), Milosevic (Ljuboja 46), D Kovacevic.
Bulgaria: Zdravkov - Kishishev, Pazin (Stojanov 69), Kirilov, I Petkov, Peev, Stilian Petrov, Balakov, Jankovic (Todorov 46), M Petrov (Borimirov 62), Berbatov (Chilikov 69).

Mar 27 - Tunis - Tunisia four-nation tnmt semi
Tunisia 2 (Mhadhebi 46, Missaoui 55)
Ghana 2 (C Amoah 45, 48)
HT: 0-1
Tunisia 8-7 on pens
Tunisia: Boumnijel - H Trabelsi, Clayton (Ayari), Jaidi (Yahia), Zouaghi, Nafti (Chedli), Bouazizi, Melki (Jedidi), Benachour, Mhadhebi, Missaoui (Ben Khaled).

Friday, March 28

Mar 28 - Tokyo - friendly
Japan 2 (Nakamura pen 23, Inamoto 57)
Uruguay 2 (Forlan 21, Lembo 25)
HT: 1-2. **Att:** 54,039. **Ref:** Kim Tae-young (SKo)
Japan: Kawaguchi - Akita, Narahashi, Hattori, Morioka, H Nakata, Nakamura (Alex 46), Inamoto, Ono (K Nakata 46), T Suzuki (Kurobe 75), Takahara.
Uruguay: Carini - Dario Rodriguez, Lembo, Sorondo, B Silva (Ensenat 81), Lima, Sosa, Eguren (Curbelo 81), Recoba, Chevanton (Peralta 63), Forlan (Estoyanoff 83).

Saturday, March 29

Mar 29 - Luanda - friendly
Angola 1 (Gilberto pen 5)
Algeria 1 (Akrour 85)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 8,000. **Ref:** Mavunza (Ang)
Angola: Marito - Sergio, Kali, Renato (Manuel), Yamba Asha, Figueiredo, Gilberto (Stopirra), Filipe, Andre Macanga, Johnson Makeba (Malamba), Flavio Amado.
Algeria: Belmellat - Zarabi (Aribi), Drioueche, Zafour, Zaoui, K Ghazi (Maouche), Mansouri (Diss), Brahami, Saifi (Fellahi), B Daoud (Akrour), Cherrad.

Mar 29 - Alajuela - friendly
Costa Rica 2 (W Parks 36, Bennett 89)
Paraguay 1 (J C Caceres 53)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 17,000. **Ref:** Quesada (CR)
Costa Rica: Mesen - Wright, G Martinez, Marin, L Gonzalez, Vallejos, A Castro (Bennett 56), Centeno (D Fonseca 70), Lopez (Soto 56), W Parks (Scott 46), R Fonseca.
Paraguay: Chilavert (Tavarelli 46) - Martinez, Maldonado, Da Silva, J C Caceres, Quintana, Britez (Isasi 64), A Ortiz, Jimenez (Campos 46), Cabanas (Avalos 78), V Ortiz (Bareiros 46).

Mar 29 - Tallinn - friendly
Estonia 2 (Oper 72, 90)
Canada 1 (Stalteri 47)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 2,500. **Ref:** Hansson (Swe)
Estonia: Poom - Ailas, Lemsalu, Jaager, U Rooba, Reinumae (Leetma 59), Haavistu (Teever 81), Kristal, Zelinski (Oper 61), Zahhovaiko (Viikmae 46), Terehhov.
Canada: Onstad - Fletcher (Pozniak 54), Hastings, McKenna, Fenwick, De Guzman, Stalteri, Imhof, Corazzin (Friend 78), Nash, Brennan.

Mar 29 - Oporto - friendly
Portugal 2 (Pauleta 6, Deco 81)
Brazil 1 (Ronaldinho pen 64)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Yefet (Isr)
Portugal: Ricardo - Paulo Ferreira, Fernando Couto, Fernando Meira, Rui Jorge, Rui Costa, Costinha, Maniche (Luis Loureiro 84), Sergio Conceicao (Deco 60), Pauleta, Simao (Miguel 86).
Brazil: Marcos - Cafu, Luisao, Edmilson, Roberto Carlos, Kleberson, Gilberto Silva, Ze Roberto (Amoroso 46; Junior 85), Ronaldinho, Rivaldo, Ronaldo (Adriano 46). *Sent off: Roberto Carlos 81min.*

Mar 29 - Busan - friendly
South Korea 0
Colombia 0
Att: 56,000
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Kim Tae-young, Lee Min-sung (Cho Byung-kuk 46), Lee Young-pyo, Choi Sung-yong, Yoo Sang-chul, Kim Nam-il (Woo Sung-yong 79), Lee Chun-soo (Choi Sung-kuk 43), Seol Ki-hyeon, Ahn Jung-hwan, Choi Yong-soo (Kim Sang-sik 61).
Colombia: Mondragon - Corboba, Yepes, Sinisterra, Martinez, Velasquez (Rivas 46), Ramirez (Perez 46), Lozano, Candelo (Carpintero 57), Sarmiento, Castillo (Ruiz 87).

Mar 29 - Seattle - friendly
United States 2 (Kirovski 52, Donovan 76)
Venezuela 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 17,819. **Ref:** Seifert (Can)
USA: Keller - Convey, Bocanegra, Pope (Garcia 85), Cherundolo (Hejduk 66), Mastroeni, O'Brien, Beasley, Klein (Stewart 46), McBride (Buddle 80), Kirovski (Donovan 60).
Venezuela: Angelucci - Vallenilla (Alvarado 81), Rey, Vielma, Rojas, L Vera (Villafraz 46), Jimenez, Urdaneta (G Perez 67), Paez, Noriega (Casseres 67), Garcia (Moreno 46). *Sent off: Angelucci 86min (Rojas in goal for remainder of game).*

Sunday, March 30

Mar 30 - Santiago - friendly
Chile 2 (Mirosevic 44, Pinilla 64)
Peru 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Chile: Peric - Contreras, J Vargas, R Rojas, Maldonado (Pizarro 70), Acuna, Munoz (Tello 46), Mirosevic, Martel, S Gonzalez (Pinilla 60), Soto (Navia 46).
Peru: Ibanez - Villalta, Galliquio, Quinteros (Farfan 57), Hidalgo, Salas, Jayo, Zegarra, Palacios, Mendoza, Pizarro.

Mar 30 - Tunis - Tunisia four-nation tnmt 3-pl
Ghana 3 (Appiah 5, C Amoah 32, Gyan 60)
Madagascar 3
Ghana 10-9 on pens
Ghana: Kankani - Muntari (M Amoah), Johnson, Essien, Mensah (Asante), Aduobe, Attram, Appiah, Boateng (Ibrahim), Aidoo (Gyan), C Amoah (Boakye).

Mar 30 - Tunis - Tunisia four-nation tnmt Fnl
Tunisia 1 (Bouazizi 80)
Cameroon 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Guezzaz (Mor)
Tunisia: Azaiez - Trabelsi, Yahia (Zouaghi), Bouzaiene, Ayari, Chedli (Bouazizi), Mnari (Nafti), Jedidi (Melki; Benachour), Mouelhi (Clayton), Ben Khaled, Selliti.
Cameroon: Kameni - Mettomo, Tchato, Song, Wome, Olembe, Geremi, Nbome, Eto'o, Job (Seril), Ndoumbe.

Wednesday, April 2

Apr 2 - Minsk - friendly
Belarus 2 (M Tsygalko 26, Rozhkov 52)
Uzbekistan 2 (Khvostunov pen 66, Geinrikh 69)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 4,000. **Ref:** Lauks (Lat)
Belarus: Y Tsygalko (Zhevnov 46) - Kovalchuk (Kulchy 46), Khrapkovsky, Lukhvich (Omelyanchuk 63), Shtanyuk (Rovneiko 46), Gurenko, Kovba (Bialkevich 46), Romaschenko, Volodenkov, Kutuzov (Shuneiko 46), M Tsygalko (Rozhkov 46).
Uzbekistan: Polakov (Safonov 60) - Ashmuratov, Fedorov, Usmanov, Vlasechev, Akopants, Karpenko (Bairamov 72), Sheshelov (Berdyev 87), Shatskikh (Geinrikh 54), Khvostunov, Shirshov (Khaidarov 90).

Apr 2 - Tegucigalpa - friendly
Honduras 1 (Guevara pen 14)
Paraguay 1 (Quintana 55)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Batres (Gtm)
Honduras: Valladares - Mendoza (W Palacios 46), Beata, M Palacios, Rosales (Gutierrez 40), Guerrero, Alvarez (Tilgauth 40), R Morales, Hernandez (E Martinez 66), Guevara, Ramirez (Carcamo 66).
Paraguay: Chilavert (Tavarelli 46) - Isasi (Britez 75), Da Silva, J C Caceres, Quintana, A Ortiz, Salcedo (Cabanas 56), Sorilla, Lopez (Bareiro 81), Cardozo (Avalos 88), Campos (Nunez 71).

Apr 2 - Lima - friendly
Peru 3 (Quinteros 18, Pizarro 47, 48)
Chile 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)
Peru: Delgado - Jorge Soto, Rebosio, Villalta, Hidalgo, Jayo, Zegarra, Quinteros, Palacios, Mendoza, Pizarro.
Chile: Peric - Alvarez, R Rojas, Contreras, Perez, Tello, Ormazabal, Acuna, Martel, Pinilla, Navia.

Apr 2 - Lausanne, Switzerland - friendly
Portugal 1 (Figo 23)
Macedonia 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Nobs (Swi)
Portugal: Ricardo - Paulo Ferreira, Fernando Couto, Fernando Meira (Jorge Andrade 64), Rui Jorge (Rogerio Matias 58), Costinha, Maniche (Luis Loureiro 68), Sergio Conceicao (Silas 73), Rui Costa (Deco 64), Figo (Simao 58), Pauleta (Nuno Gomes 68).
Macedonia: Milosevski - Braga, Sedloski, Vasovski, Lazarevski, Grozdanovski, Sumulikoski (Trajanov 24), Jancevski (Grncarov 33), Sakiri, Naumoski (Stojkov 16), Pandev (Zdravevski 48; Vajs 90).

Apr 2 - Kyiv - friendly
Ukraine 1 (Kalinichenko pen 83)
Latvia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Ukraine: Shovkovskyi (Reva 46) - Nesmachnyi, Fedorov (Popov 67), Tymoshchuk, Radchenko (Starostyak 74), Dmytrulin (Holovko 46), Kalinichenko, Husin (Kormiltsev 46), Vorobei, Voronin (Serebrennikov 55), Venhlynskyi (Onyschenko 70).
Latvia: Kolinko - Stepanovs, Astafjevs, Zirnis, Laizans, Blagonadezdins, Isakovs, Bleidelis, Verpakovskis (Rimkus 84), Rubins, Prohorenkovs (Miholaps 73).

Apr 2 - Caracas - friendly
Venezuela 2 (Urdaneta pen 10, Paez 38)
Jamaica 0
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 25,000. **Ref:** Diaz (Ecu)
Venezuela: Angelucci (Sanhouse 50) - Vallenilla (Rivero 64), Cichero (Rouga 77), Alvarado, H Gonzalez (Vielma 86), Jimenez (Villafraz 64), M Mea Vitali, Paez, Urdaneta (Casseres 58), Arango, Moreno (Noriega 58).
Jamaica: Sawyers (A Lawrence 46) - Thomas, Dixon (Dunn 80), Stewart, Neil, Scarlett (D Williams 77), Chin-Sue, Daley, Hue (Nicholas 56), Dawkins (J Williams 76), Nelson (McCreath 68).

Wednesday, April 16

Apr 16 - Seoul - friendly
South Korea 0
Japan 1 (Nagai 90)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 64,000
South Korea: Lee Woon-jae - Choi Sung-yong, Cho Byung-kuk, Kim Tae-young, Park Choong-kyun (Park Ju-sung 89), Yoo Sang-chul (Kim Sang-sik 76), Kim Doh-keun (Kim Do-heon 59), Lee Chun-soo, Ahn Jung-hwan, Choi Tae-uk (Park Dong-hyuk, 80), Lee Dong-gook (Choi Sung-kuk 65).
Japan: Narazaki - Narahashi, Akita, Morioka, Hattori, Fukunishi, K Nakata, Ogasawara, Alex, Nakayama (Nagai 75), Yamashita (Oku 46).

Sunday, April 20

Apr 20 - Harare - COSAFA CC, 1st rnd
Zimbabwe 1 (A Ndlovu 20)
Angola 0
HT: 1-0

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP 2004 QUALIFIERS

Group 1

Mar 29 - Blantyre
Malawi 0
Nigeria 1 (Utaka 10)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Nkole (Zam)
Malawi: Nyasula - Mtambo, Msowoya, Gatros, Nundwe, Kondowe (Mtawali 82), Yobe (S M Phiri 54), Mponda, Mgangira, Mwafulirwa (V Phiri 72), Kanyenda.
Nigeria: Enyeama - Yobo, Udeze, Enakhire, Olajenbesi, Ekong, Okocha, Utaka, Opabunmi (Ileagu 72), Nworgu, Aiyegbeni (Akwuegbu 77).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigeria	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Malawi	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Angola	2	0	1	1	0	1	1

08.09.02.....Angola-Nigeria.....0-0
12.10.02.....Malawi-Angola.....1-0
29.03.03.....Malawi-Nigeria.....0-1
07.06.03.....Nigeria-Malawi
21.06.03.....Nigeria-Angola
04.07.03.....Angola-Malawi
Djibouti withdrew

Group 2

Mar 30 - Addis Abeba
Ethiopia 1 (Felekah 80)
Liberia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Ali Mohamed (Dji)

Mar 30 - Conakry
Guinea 2 (Mansare pen 40, A Sylla 90)
Niger 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Monteiro Duarte (CVI)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Guinea	3	2	0	1	5	1	6
Ethiopia	3	2	0	1	3	3	6
Niger	3	1	0	2	3	4	3
Liberia	3	1	0	2	1	4	3

07.09.02.....Niger-Ethiopia.....3-1
08.09.02.....Guinea-Liberia.....3-0
12.10.02.....Liberia-Niger.....1-0
13.10.02.....Ethiopia-Guinea.....1-0
30.03.03.....Ethiopia-Liberia.....1-0
30.03.03.....Guinea-Niger.....2-0
08.06.03.....Liberia-Ethiopia
08.06.03.....Niger-Guinea
21.06.03.....Ethiopia-Niger
22.06.03.....Liberia-Guinea
06.07.03.....Guinea-Ethiopia
06.07.03.....Niger-Liberia

Group 3

Mar 29 - Khartoum
Sudan 3 (Tambal 35, 70, Kabir 68)
Benin 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Buenkadila (DRC)
Sent off: Latoundji (Benin) 31min

Mar 29 - Dar-es-Salaam
Tanzania 0
Zambia 1 (Lungu 25)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Tessema (Eth)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zambia	3	2	1	0	3	1	7
Sudan	3	2	0	1	5	2	6
Benin	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Tanzania	3	0	0	3	1	7	0

08.09.02.....Benin-Tanzania.....4-0
08.09.02.....Sudan-Zambia.....0-1
12.10.02.....Tanzania-Sudan.....1-2
12.10.02.....Zambia-Benin.....1-1
29.03.03.....Sudan-Benin.....3-0
29.03.03.....Tanzania-Zambia.....0-1
07.06.03.....Zambia-Tanzania
08.06.03.....Benin-Sudan
21.06.03.....Tanzania-Benin
21.06.03.....Zambia-Sudan
06.07.03.....Benin-Zambia
06.07.03.....Sudan-Tanzania

Group 4

Mar 30 - Maputo
Mozambique 1 (Dario 89)
Burkina Faso 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Nunkoo (Mrs)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Congo	2	1	1	0	3	0	4
Burkina Faso	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
Mozambique	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
Cent Af Rep	2	0	1	1	2	3	1

08.09.02.....Congo-Burkina Faso.....0-0
09.09.02.....Central African Rep-Mozambique...1-1
13.10.02.....Burkina Faso-Central African Rep...2-1
13.10.02.....Mozambique-Congo.....0-3

30.03.03 .....Mozambique-Burkina Faso.....1-0
04.05.03 .....Congo-Central African Rep
07.06.03 .....Burkina Faso-Mozambique
08.06.03 .....Central African Rep-Congo
21.06.03 .....Burkina Faso-Congo
22.06.03 .....Mozambique-Central African Rep
06.07.03 .....Central African Rep-Burkina Faso
06.07.03 .....Congo-Mozambique

Group 5

Mar 29 - Praia
Cape Verde Islands 2 (Duca 68, Calo 80)
Togo 1 (Wondu 37)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Nandigna (GuB)
Sent off: Tchangai (Togo) 75min; Duca (Cape Verde) 90min

Mar 29 - Nairobi
Kenya 4 (Mambo 18, 70, Oyuga 45, Oliech 47)
Mauritania 0
HT: 2-0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kenya	3	3	0	0	8	0	9
Cape Verde Is	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
Togo	3	1	0	2	2	5	3
Mauritania	3	0	0	3	0	7	0

06.09.02 .....Mauritania-Cape Verde Islands.....0-2
07.09.02 .....Kenya-Togo.....3-0
12.10.02 .....Cape Verde Islands-Kenya.....0-1
12.10.02 .....Togo-Mauritania.....1-0
29.03.03 .....Cape Verde Islands-Togo.....2-1
29.03.03 .....Kenya-Mauritania.....4-0
06.06.03 .....Mauritania-Kenya
08.06.03 .....Togo-Cape Verde Islands
22.06.03 .....Cape Verde Islands-Mauritania
22.06.03 .....Togo-Kenya
04.07.03 .....Mauritania-Togo
05.07.03 .....Kenya-Cape Verde Islands

Group 6

Mar 30 - Asmara
Ethiopia 0
Mali 2 (Thiam 54, Dramane Coulibaly 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Abdulkadir (Tan)

Mar 30 - Harare
Zimbabwe 3 (P Ndlovu pen 21, pen 90, A Ndlovu 88)
Seychelles 1 (Zialor 89)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** Bernardo Colembi (Ang)
Sent off: Larue (Seychelles) 90min

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Zimbabwe	3	3	0	0	5	1	9
Mali	3	2	0	1	5	1	6
Seychelles	3	1	0	2	2	6	3
Eritrea	3	0	0	3	0	4	0

08.09.02 .....Seychelles-Eritrea.....1-0
08.09.02 .....Zimbabwe-Mali.....1-0
12.10.02 .....Eritrea-Zimbabwe.....0-1
13.10.02 .....Mali-Seychelles.....3-0
30.03.03 .....Eritrea-Mali.....0-2
30.03.03 .....Zimbabwe-Seychelles.....3-1
07.06.03 .....Seychelles-Zimbabwe
08.06.03 .....Mali-Eritrea
21.06.03 .....Eritrea-Seychelles
22.06.03 .....Mali-Zimbabwe
05.07.03 .....Seychelles-Mali
06.07.03 .....Zimbabwe-Eritrea

Group 7

Mar 29 - Libreville
Gabon 4 (Moulengui 9, Yannick 39, 48, Bito'o pen 67)
Equatorial Guinea 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Tavares Neto (STP)
Sent off: Ndong 49min, Ekolo 66min (both Equatorial Guinea)

Mar 29 - Freetown
Sierra Leone 0
Morocco 0
Ref: Kaba (Lbr)
Sierra Leone: Brima Sesay - Kargbo, Woobay, Alpha, Sama, Yanbudeh, Jalloh (Samura), Keister (H Sesay), C Mansaray, M Bah, S Mansaray.
Morocco: Bagui - Saber, Ouaddou, El Karkouri, Naybet, Hdiouad (Lafoui), Zairi (Regragui), Kissi, El Yaagoubi (Chihab), Baha, Boughanem.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morocco	3	2	1	0	6	0	7
Sierra Leone	3	2	1	0	5	1	7
Gabon	3	1	0	2	4	3	3
Equatorial Guinea	3	0	0	3	1	12	0

07.09.02 .....Gabon-Morocco.....0-1
08.09.02 .....Equatorial Guinea-Sierra Leone.....1-3
12.10.02 .....Sierra Leone-Gabon.....2-0
13.10.02 .....Morocco-Equatorial Guinea.....5-0
29.03.03 .....Gabon-Equatorial Guinea.....4-0
29.03.03 .....Sierra Leone-Morocco.....0-0
07.06.03 .....Morocco-Sierra Leone
08.06.03 .....Equatorial Guinea-Gabon
21.06.03 .....Morocco-Gabon
21.06.03 .....Sierra Leone-Equatorial Guinea
06.07.03 .....Equatorial Guinea-Morocco
06.07.03 .....Gabon-Sierra Leone

Group 8

Mar 30 - Banjul
Gambia 0
Senegal 0
Ref: Djingarey (Ngr)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gambia	2	1	1	0	6	0	4
Senegal	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Lesotho	2	0	0	2	0	7	0

08.09.02 .....Lesotho-Senegal.....0-1
13.10.02 .....Gambia-Lesotho.....6-0
30.03.03 .....Gambia-Senegal.....0-0
08.06.03 .....Senegal-Gambia
22.06.03 .....Senegal-Lesotho
06.07.03 .....Lesotho-Gambia
Sao Tome e Principe withdrew

Group 9

Mar 30 - Benghazi
Libya 0
Botswana 0
Ref: Lassina Pare (BuF)

Mar 30 - Mbabane
Swaziland 1 (M Dlamini 10)
DR Congo 1 (Musasa 65)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Katjimune (Nam)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Swaziland	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
DR Congo	3	1	1	1	5	4	4
Libya	3	1	1	1	4	4	4
Botswana	3	0	2	1	0	2	2

07.09.02 .....Botswana-Swaziland.....0-0
08.09.02 .....Libya-DR Congo.....3-2
13.10.02 .....DR Congo-Botswana.....2-0
13.10.02 .....Swaziland-Libya.....2-1
30.03.03 .....Libya-Botswana.....0-0
30.03.03 .....Swaziland-DR Congo.....1-1
08.06.03 .....Botswana-Libya
08.06.03 .....DR Congo-Swaziland
22.06.03 .....DR Congo-Libya
22.06.03 .....Swaziland-Botswana
04.07.03 .....Libya-Swaziland
06.07.03 .....Botswana-DR Congo

Group 10

Mar 29 - Port Louis
Mauritius 0
Egypt 1 (Hossam 45)
HT: 0-1. **Att:** 800. **Ref:** Masole (Bot)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Madagascar	2	2	0	0	2	0	6
Egypt	2	1	0	1	1	1	3
Mauritius	2	0	0	2	0	2	0

07.09.02 .....Madagascar-Egypt.....1-0
12.10.02 .....Mauritius-Madagascar.....0-1
29.03.03 .....Mauritius-Egypt.....0-1
06.06.03 .....Egypt-Mauritius
20.06.03 .....Egypt-Madagascar
06.07.03 .....Madagascar-Mauritius
Guinea-Bissau withdrew

Group 11

Mar 30 - Bujumbura
Burundi 0
Ivory Coast 1 (Bakari 57)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Gasingwa (Rwa)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
South Africa	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Ivory Coast	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Burundi	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

08.09.02 .....Ivory Coast-South Africa.....0-0
13.10.02 .....South Africa-Burundi.....2-0
30.03.03 .....Burundi-Ivory Coast.....0-1
08.06.03 .....Ivory Coast-Burundi
22.06.03 .....South Africa-Ivory Coast
06.07.03 .....Burundi-South Africa

Group 12

Mar 30 - Ndjamena
Chad 2 (Hisseine 57, pen 89)
Namibia 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Dimanche (CAR)
Sent off: Benjamin 74min, N Nauseb 89min (both Namibia)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Algeria	2	2	0	0	5	1	6
Chad	2	1	0	1	3	4	3
Namibia	2	0	0	2	0	3	0

07.09.02 .....Namibia-Algeria.....0-1
11.10.02 .....Algeria-Chad.....4-1
30.03.03 .....Chad-Namibia.....2-0
07.06.03 .....Namibia-Chad
20.06.03 .....Algeria-Namibia
06.07.03 .....Chad-Algeria

Group 13

Mar 29 - Kigali
Rwanda 0
Uganda 0
Ref: Bakheit Mohamed (Sud)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Uganda	2	1	1	0	1	0	4
Ghana	2	1	0	1	4	3	3
Rwanda	2	0	1	1	2	4	1

07.09.02 .....Uganda-Ghana.....1-0
13.10.02 .....Ghana-Rwanda.....4-2
29.03.03 .....Rwanda-Uganda.....0-0
07.06.03 .....Uganda-Rwanda
22.06.03 .....Ghana-Uganda
06.07.03 .....Rwanda-Ghana

● The 13 group winners qualify for the finals, along with hosts Tunisia and holders Cameroon.
● The 16th finals place will be awarded to the best second-placed finisher from Groups 2 to 9. This will be decided first by the highest number of points, then goal difference, then highest number of goals scored and, if necessary, a play-off.

GOLD CUP 2003 QUALIFIERS

CARIBBEAN ZONE

Group A

In Kingston, Jamaica

Mar 26
Haiti 2 (Menelas 22, 64)
Martinique 1 (Percin 5)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Lee (A&B)
Haiti: Clamard - Desir, Mayard, Gilles, Romulus (Mentor 88), J-J Pierre, Corriolan, Dorcelus, Thelusma, Menelas (Clerjuste 73), Lormera (Olman 83).
Martinique: Heurlie - Vaton, Percin, Clorus, Reuperne, Dicanot, J Goron (Sophie 80), Lavril, Mirande, Duragrin (Padoly 68), Bilon (Real 46).

Mar 26
Jamaica 5 (A Williams 9, Taylor 11, Chin-Sue 37, C Davis 56, Daley 62)
St Lucia 0
HT: 3-0. **Ref:** Brizan (T&T)
Jamaica: Ricketts - C Davis, Neil, Marshall (Ziadie 21), Thomas, A Williams, Daley (Johnson 69), Chin-Sue, Whitmore, Lisbie, Taylor (Burton 76).
St Lucia: Erysthee - E Joseph, Emmanuel, Glasgow, Tobie, Xavier, Flavius (Elva 54), Jean, V Joseph (James 78), Kirton, Mark (McVane 48).

Mar 28
St Lucia 2 (Emmanuel 45, Flavius 90)
Haiti 1 (Turlien 73)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Lee (A&B)
St Lucia: Erysthee - E Joseph, Emmanuel, Glasgow (Sheldon 55), Tobie, Xavier (Walter 79), Flavius, Jean, V Joseph (McVane 58), Elva, Kirton.
Haiti: Clamard - Desir (Gabriel 46), Mayard, Gilles (G Pierre 75), Romulus, J-J Pierre, Corriolan, Dorcelus, Thelusma, Menelas, Lormera (Cesar 37). *Sent off: Corriolan 28min.*

Mar 28
Jamaica 2 (Daley 83, C Davis 90)
Martinique 2 (J Goron 25, Duragrin 63)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Brizan (T&T)
Jamaica: Ricketts - C Davis, Neil, Ziadie, Thomas, A Williams (Johnson 52), Daley, Chin-Sue, Whitmore (J Williams 74), Lisbie, Taylor (Burton 65).
Martinique: Heurlie - Girier-Dufournier, Vaton, Percin (Real 89), Clorus, Reuperne, Dicanot, J Goron (Bilon 90), Lavril, Mirande, Duragrin (Sophie 71).

Mar 30
St Lucia 4 (Elva 21, Mark 38, Jean 52, V Joseph 56)
Martinique 5 (J Goron 24, Girier-Dufournier 64, 84, Reuperne 73, Duragrin 89)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Lee (A&B)
St Lucia: Erysthee - E Joseph, Emmanuel, Tobie, Xavier (V Joseph 51), Flavius (McVane 77), Mark (Glasgow 71), Jean, Elva, Kirton, Lastic.
Martinique: Heurlie - Girier-Dufournier, Vaton, Percin, Clorus, Reuperne, Dicanot (Bertrand 46; Duragrin 75), J Goron, Lavril, Mirande (Palmont 46), Sophie.

Mar 30
Jamaica 3 (Johnson 15, Daley 58, J-J Pierre og 66)
Haiti 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Brizan (T&T)
Jamaica: Ricketts - C Davis (Dixon 51), Goodison, Neil, Ziadie, Daley, Chin-Sue, Johnson (J Williams 81), Whitmore (Thomas 62), A Williams, Nelson.
Haiti: Gabart - Desir, Mayard, Cesar, Gilles, Romulus, J-J Pierre, Dorcelus, Thelusma, Clersant, Lormera.

GROUP A – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Jamaica	3	2	1	0	10	2	7
Martinique	3	1	1	1	8	8	4
Haiti	3	1	0	2	3	6	3
St Lucia	3	1	0	2	6	11	3

Group B

Mar 26 - Port-of-Spain, Trinidad
Guadeloupe 2 (Farnabe 44, 51)
Cuba 3 (Galindo 17, 83, Dalcourt 30)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Callender (Bar)
Guadeloupe: Mercury - Lutin, Likion (Fermely 85), Vertot, D Mocka, Cassubie (Toutoute-Fauconnier 43), Lambourde, Theresine, Chimbonda, Farnabe, Belia (Benon 58).
Cuba: Reve - Rivero (Cruzata 62), Marquez, Pedro, L Perez, Ramirez, L Reyes (Cervantes 72), Dalcourt (More 70), Galindo, Ruiz, Fernandez.

Mar 26 - Port-of-Spain, Trinidad
Trinidad & Tobago 2 (Wise 3, John 55)
Antigua & Barbuda 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** James (Guy)
Trinidad & Tobago: S George - C Demmin, Lawrence, M Andrews (Williams 82), A Pierre, A John, Edwards, Wise (Fitzwilliams 54), Rahim, S John, Samuel (Scotland 75).
Antigua & Barbuda: J Simon - Christian, Dublin, S Anthony, Jeffers, Troy Simon (James 72), Watts (Harris 63), W Roberts, R Thomas, Gregory, Skepple (O'Garro 78).

Mar 28 - Macoya, Trinidad
Cuba 2 (More 65, 78)
Antigua & Barbuda 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** James (Guy)
Cuba: Reve - Rivero, Marquez, Fernandez, Pedro, Cruzata, L Perez, L Reyes (Cervantes 46), Dalcourt (Ramirez 55), Galindo, Ruiz (More 30).
Antigua & Barbuda: J Simon - Christian, Dublin, S Anthony, Jeffers, Troy Simon, Watts (Tyio Simon 69), W Roberts, Harris, Gregory, Skepple (T Thomas 67).

Mar 28 - Macoya, Trinidad
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (S John pen 88)
Guadeloupe 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Callender (Bar)

Trinidad & Tobago: S George - C Demmin, Lawrence, A Pierre (Mitchell 55), A John, Edwards, D Demmin, Fitzwilliams (Scotland 64), Rahim, S John, Samuel (Williams 82).
Guadeloupe: Mercury - Ramsamy, Lutin, Vertot, D Mocka, Benon (Theresine 87), Toutoute-Fauconnier, Lambourde, Chimbonda, Farnabe (Fermely 75), Belia (Nabab 66). *Sent off: Toutoute-Fauconnier 62min.*

Mar 30 - Marabella, Trinidad
Guadeloupe 2 (D Mocka 67, 76)
Antigua & Barbuda 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Callender (Bar)
Guadeloupe: Adelaide - Ramsamy, Lutin, Vertot, D Mocka (Darcourt 79), Benon (Cassubie 74), Fermely (Farnabe 56), Lambourde, Chimbonda, Belia, Theresine.
Antigua & Barbuda: E Anthony - R Thomas, Christian, Dublin, S Anthony, Jeffers, Troy Simon (Carr 67), Tyio Simon (James 46), W Roberts (Harris 23), Gregory, Skepple.

Mar 30 - Marabella, Trinidad
Trinidad & Tobago 1 (S John 18)
Cuba 3 (Ramirez 26, More 72, Galindo 77)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** James (Guy)
Trinidad & Tobago: S George - C Demmin, Lawrence, M Andrews (Mitchell 46), A John (Toussaint 83), Edwards, D Demmin, Fitzwilliams (Samuel 69), Rahim, Scotland, S John.
Cuba: Reve - Rivero, Marquez, Fernandez, Pedro, Cruzata, L Perez, Cervantes (L Reyes 80), Ramirez, Galindo (Ruiz 90), More (Prado 87).

GROUP B – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cuba	3	3	0	0	8	3	9
Trinidad & Tob	3	2	0	1	4	3	6
Guadeloupe	3	1	0	2	4	4	3
Antigua & Barb	3	0	0	3	0	6	0

Group winners qualify for the 12-nation Gold Cup finals, to be held in the United States from July 12 to 27. Runners-up enter play-off pool with Honduras (Central American qualifying zone fourth-placed side), from which the top two also qualify for the finals

EUROPE

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Quarter-finals, 1st legs

April 8

Ajax (Hol) 0
Milan (Ita) 0
Att: 50,967. **Ref:** Hauge (Nor)
Ajax: Lobont - Trabelsi, Pasanen (De Jong 73), Chivu, O'Brien - Galasek (Sneijder 68), Yakubu - Pienaar, Van der Vaart, Maxwell - Ibrahimovic (Litmanen 73).
Milan: Dida - Simic, Nesta, Maldini, Costacurta - Rui Costa, Gattuso, Ambrosini, Seedorf (Serginho 26) - Inzaghi (Tomasson 73), Shevchenko (Rivaldo 79).

Real Madrid (Spa) 3 (Figo 12, Raul 28, 49)
Manchester United (Eng) 1 (Van Nistelrooy 52)
HT: 2-0. **Att:** 78,000. **Ref:** Frisk (Swe)
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Hierro, Ivan Helguera, Roberto Carlos - Flavio Conceicao, Makelele - Figo, Raul, Zidane - Ronaldo (Guti 82).
Man Utd: Barthez - G Neville (Solskjaer 84), Ferdinand, Brown, Silvestre (O'Shea 57) - Beckham, Keane, Butt, Giggs - Scholes - Van Nistelrooy.

April 9

Internazionale (Ita) 1 (Vieri 14)
Valencia (Spa) 0
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 52,623. **Ref:** Merk (Ger)
Inter: Toldo - J Zanetti, Cordoba, Materazzi, Coco (Pasquale 31) - Sergio Conceicao (Okan 65), Di Biagio, C Zanetti, Emre - Crespo (Cannavaro 84), Vieri. *Sent off: Emre 57min.*
Valencia: Canizares - Reveillere, Ayala, Marchena, Carboni - Albelda, Baraja - Rufete (Mista 81), Aimar, Vicente (Fabio Aurelio 85) - Carew (Angulo 66). *Sent off: Albelda 57min.*

Juventus (Ita) 1 (Montero 16)
Barcelona (Spa) 1 (Saviola 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 48,783. **Ref:** Michel (Slk)
Juventus: Buffon - Thuram, Ferrara, Montero, Zambrotta (Zalayeta 67) - Camoranesi, Tacchinardi, Tudor (Birindelli 61), Davids - Nedved - Del Piero (Di Vaio 82).
Barcelona: Bonano - Gabri, Puyol, De Boer, Reiziger - Overmars (Luis Enrique 83), Xavi (Gerard 74), Motta, Riquelme (Mendieta 63) - Saviola, Kluivert.

Quarter-finals, 2nd legs

April 22

Barcelona 1 (Xavi 65)
Juventus 2 (Nedved 53, Zalayeta 114)
Aet. **HT:** 0-0. **90mins:** 1-1. **Att:** 95,000. **Ref:** Poll (Eng)
Juventus 3-2 on agg
Barcelona: Bonano - Puyol, Andersson (Mendieta 61), De Boer, Reiziger (Gerard 90) - Overmars (Riquelme 85), Xavi, Motta, Luis Enrique - Saviola, Kluivert.
Juventus: Buffon - Thuram, Ferrara, Montero, Zambrotta - Tacchinardi, Davids - Camoranesi (Birindelli 46), Nedved, Del Piero (Tudor 84) - Di Vaio (Zalayeta 46). *Sent off: Davids 79min.*

Valencia 2 (Aimar 7, Baraja 51)
Internazionale 1 (Vieri 5)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 48,000. **Ref:** Milton Nielsen (Den)
Agg 2-2. Inter on away goals
Valencia: Canizares - Reveillere, Ayala, Marchena, Carboni (Fabio Aurelio 80) - Angulo, Baraja, Vicente - Aimar (Mista 84) - Carew (Rufete 73), J Sanchez.
Inter: Toldo - J Zanetti, Gamarra, Materazzi, Cordoba - Dalmat, Di Biagio (Okan 75), C Zanetti, Pasquale (Adani 46) - Crespo, Vieri (Recoba 32).

April 23

Manchester United 4 (Van Nistelrooy 43, Ivan Helguera og 52, Beckham 71, 84)
Real Madrid 3 (Ronaldo 12, 50, 59)
HT: 1-1. **Att:** 66,708. **Ref:** Collina (Ita)
Real Madrid 6-5 on agg
Man Utd: Barthez - Brown, Ferdinand, Silvestre (P Neville 78), O'Shea - Keane (Fortune 82), Veron (Beckham 62), Butt - Solskjaer, Van Nistelrooy, Giggs.
Real Madrid: Casillas - Michel Salgado, Hierro, Ivan Helguera, Roberto Carlos - Makelele, Guti - Figo (Pavon 88), Zidane, McManaman (Portillo 69) - Ronaldo (Solari 68).

Milan 3 (Inzaghi 30, Shevchenko 65, Tomasson 90)
Ajax 2 (Litmanen 63, Pienaar 78)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 76,079. **Ref:** Mejuto Gonzalez (Spa)
Milan 3-2 on agg
Milan: Dida - Simic (Tomasson 84), Nesta, Maldini, Costacurta - Brocchi, Ambrosini, Rui Costa (Redondo 85), Kaladze (Rivaldo 80) - Shevchenko, Inzaghi.
Ajax: Lobont - Pasanen, Chivu, Van Damme (Litmanen 46) - Trabelsi, Yakubu, Sneijder, O'Brien - Pienaar (De Jong 84), Van der Meyde (Bergdolmo 89) - Ibrahimovic.

Semi-finals draw

Real Madrid v Juventus
1st leg, May 6; 2nd leg, May 14

Milan v Internazionale
1st leg, May 7; 2nd leg, May 13

Final

Old Trafford, Manchester; May 28

UEFA CUP

Semi-finals, 1st legs

April 10

Celtic (Sco) 1 (Larsson 50)
Boavista (Por) 1 (Valgaeren og 47)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 60,000. **Ref:** De Bleeckere (Blg)
Celtic: Douglas - Mjallby, Balde, Valgaeren - Agathe (Sylla 73), Lennon, Lambert, Thompson - Petrov (Fernandez 77) - Larsson, Hartson.
Boavista: Ricardo - Avalos, Paulo Turra, Eder - Martelinho, Pedrosa (Rui Oscar 90), Filipe Anunciacao, Erivan, Mario Loja - Luiz Claudio (Cafu 46; Bosingwa 80), Duda.

FC Porto (Por) 4 (Maniche 10, Derlei 28, 49, Helder Postiga 56)
Lazio (Ita) 1 (Claudio Lopez 6)
HT: 2-1. **Att:** 45,000. **Ref:** Vassaras (Gre)
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa, Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente - Maniche, Costinha, Alenichev (Tiago 82) - Deco - Helder Postiga (Marco Ferreira 59), Derlei (Jankauskas 86).
Lazio: Peruzzi - Pancaro, Fernando Couto, Mihajlovic, Favalli (Castroman 68) - Fiore, Simeone (Giannichedda 72), Stankovic, Cesar - Chiesa (Inzaghi 57), Claudio Lopez.

Semi-finals, 2nd legs

April 24

Boavista 0
Celtic 1 (Larsson 80)
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 11,000. **Ref:** Ivanov (Rus)
Celtic 2-1 on agg
Boavista: Ricardo - Pedrosa (Yuri 84), Avalos, Eder - Martelinho, Filipe Anunciacao, Pedro Santos, Mario Loja - Erivan (Jocivalter 80) - E Silva (Luiz Claudio 68), Duda.
Celtic: Douglas - Valgaeren (Smith 75), Balde, Mjallby - Agathe, Lennon, Lambert (Sutton 33), Petrov, Thompson - Larsson, Hartson.

Lazio 0
FC Porto 0
Att: 69,873. **Ref:** Veissiere (Fra)
Porto 4-1 on agg
Lazio: Marchegiani - Oddo, Fernando Couto, Mihajlovic, Cesar - Giannichedda (Fiore 49), Liverani (Baggio 69), Stankovic - Claudio Lopez, Inzaghi, Chiesa (Lazetic 58). *Sent off: Cesar 45min.*
Porto: Vitor Baia - Paulo Ferreira, Jorge Costa, Ricardo Carvalho, Nuno Valente - Ricardo Costa, Maniche, Alenichev (Pedro Emanuel 89) - Deco (Tiago 80) - Helder Postiga, Derlei. *Sent off: Helder Postiga 45min.*

Final

Olympic stadium, Seville; May 21

AUSTRIA

Apr 5: Austria Wien 0 Admira 2; Karnten 2 Bregenz 2; SV Ried 2 Sturm Graz 1; Salzburg 2 Rapid Wien 0.
Apr 6: Grazer AK 2 Pasching 0.
Apr 12: Bregenz 1 Karnten 2; Pasching 0 Grazer AK 2; Rapid Wien 0 Salzburg 2; Sturm Graz 4 SV Ried 2.
Apr 13: Admira 1 Austria Wien 2.
Apr 16: Austria Wien 2 SV Ried 0; Karnten 3 Sturm Graz 1; Grazer AK 1 Admira 1; Pasching 3 Rapid Wien 0; Salzburg 4 Bregenz 1.
Apr 22: Sturm Graz 0 Austria Wien 3.
Apr 23: Bregenz 2 Pasching 1; Rapid Wien 0 Grazer AK 0; SV Ried 1 Salzburg 2; Admira 4 Karnten 0.

AUSTRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria Wien	30	20	5	5	57	21	65
Grazer AK	30	12	11	7	44	29	47
Pasching	30	13	7	10	38	29	46
Salzburg	30	12	8	10	39	41	44
Sturm Graz	30	13	3	14	42	52	42
Rapid Wien	30	9	10	11	32	34	37
SV Ried	30	10	7	13	37	41	37
Karnten	30	9	7	14	35	48	34
Admira	30	7	10	13	29	44	31
Bregenz	30	6	10	14	40	54	28

BELGIUM

Saturday, April 5

Beveren 6 (Ne 2, 26, Sanogo 60, Wostijn 65, Zezeto 73, Yapi Yapo pen 85)
Mechelen 0 Att: 2,500

Club Brugge 4 (Saeternes 8, 11, 20, 41)
Mons 2 (Roussel 15, La Placa 46) Att: 20,926

La Louviere 0
Standard 2 (Arst 18, 53) Att: 4,000

Lokeren 3 (Bangoura 53, Kristinsson 60, Gretarsson pen 83)
Mouscron 2 (Zewlakow 37, Dugardein 47) Att: 6,000

Lommel v Gent – Lommel forfeited game; awarded 5-0 to Gent

Westerlo 3 (Paas 20, Haraldsen 63, Dosunmu 87)
Genk 1 (Vandenbergh 60) Att: 7,000

Sunday, April 6

Germinal Beerschot 1 (Cooreman 74)
Royal Antwerp 1 (Goots 47) Att: 10,000

Lierse 0
Anderlecht 1 (Dindane 12) Att: 12,300

St Truiden 2 (Buvens 2, 22)
Charleroi 1 (Eduardo 37) Att: 4,000

Friday, April 11

Club Brugge 3 (De Coninck og 39, Martens 64, Stoica 70)
Westerlo 0 Att: 21,525

Germinal Beerschot 2 (Kpaka 44, 71)
Genk 1 (Daerden 1) Att: 8,000

St Truiden 2 (Boffin 78, 90)
La Louviere 1 (Magro 21) Att: 4,000

Saturday, April 12

Beveren 7 (Sanogo 6, 58, Yapi Yapo 15, 78, Wostijn 20, Zezeto 42, 87)
Lierse 1 (Frigard 4) Att: 7,000

Lokeren 5 (Kristinsson 2, 7, 65, Baldvinsson 40, Gretarsson 84)
Lommel 0 Att: 4,100

Sunday, April 13

Anderlecht 2 (Lovre 34, Jestrovic 60)
Standard 1 (Vandooren 90) Att: 24,954

Charleroi 1 (Boeka-Lisasi 81)
Gent 2 (Oyawole 12, Schepens pen 80) Att: 7,224

Mons 2 (Roussel 30, Gorniak 81)
Mechelen 0 Att: 4,000

Mouscron 1 (Gregoire 44)
Royal Antwerp 0 Att: 4,000

Friday, April 18

Genk 0
Club Brugge 3 (Saeternes 7, Ceh 19, Verheyen 42) Att: 24,553

Saturday, April 19

Anderlecht 2 (Baseggio 59, Dindane 66)
St Truiden 0 Att: 23,971

Gent 3 (Schepens 5, 7, 33)
La Louviere 2 (Ishiaku 39, pen 65) Att: 7,420

Mechelen 0
Westerlo 4 (Mrzlecki og 52, Dosunmu 65, Paas 83, 90) Att: 2,500

Mons 2 (Berquemanne 23, De Roeck og 28)
Lierse 1 (Huysegems 55) Att: 4,000

Royal Antwerp v Lommel – Lommel forfeited game; awarded 5-0 to Royal Antwerp

Sunday, April 20

Mouscron 1 (Kubik 68)
Germinal Beerschot 6 (Kpaka 35, 60, Cooreman 54, De Wree 79, Reigel 81, Quansah 85) Att: 5,210

Standard 2 (Da Silva Moreira 24, Arst pen 90)
Beveren 0 Att: 12,500

Monday, April 21

Charleroi 4 (Eduardo 11, 54, Detal 63, Macquet 76)
Lokeren 3 (Defays og 18, Gretarsson 37, De Beule 53) Att: 8,335

BELGIUM

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Club Brugge	29	25	1	3	91	28	76
Anderlecht	29	21	2	6	64	29	65
Lokeren	29	19	4	6	71	41	61
Lierse	29	16	7	6	47	33	55
St Truiden	29	16	6	7	58	37	54
Genk	29	14	6	9	63	47	48
Gent	29	15	2	12	50	45	47
Standard	29	13	7	9	48	34	46
Mons	29	13	3	13	42	37	42
Westerlo	29	10	3	16	30	45	33
Beveren	29	10	2	17	45	66	32
Mouscron	29	9	5	15	41	62	32
La Louviere	29	8	7	14	32	39	31
Royal Antwerp	29	8	6	15	41	50	30
Germinal B	29	8	5	16	46	51	29
Charleroi	29	6	6	17	36	63	24
Lommel	29	7	3	19	28	63	24
Mechelen	29	3	5	21	18	81	14

LEADING GOALSCORERS
21 Wesley Sonck (Genk)
20 Paul Kpaka (Germinal Beerschot)

BELGIAN CUP – semi-finals

2nd legs
Apr 15: Germinal Beerschot 0 St Truiden 0
St Truiden 1-0 on agg.
Apr 16: La Louviere 2 Lommel 0 *La Louviere 4-3 on agg.*

BULGARIA

Apr 4: Slavia 1 Naftex 0.
Apr 5: Botev 2 Rilski Sportist 1; Marek 3 Spartak Varna 0; Cherno More 3 Lokomotiv Sofia 0; Chernomorets 2 CSKA 8; Dobrudzha 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 2.
Apr 6: Levski 3 Lovech 0.
Apr 9: Lovech 0 Cherno More 2.
Apr 12: CSKA 1 Cherno More 2; Rilski Sportist 0 Dobrudzha 2; Lokomotiv Plovdiv 4 Chernomorets 0; Lokomotiv Sofia 2 Marek 0; Spartak Varna 3 Slavia 0; Lovech 4 Botev 1; Naftex 0 Levski 1.
Apr 19: Slavia 1 Lokomotiv Sofia 1; Lovech 5 Rilski Sportist 2; Botev 1 Naftex 1; Cherno More 1 Lokomotiv Plovdiv 0; Chernomorets 2 Dobrudzha 1.
Apr 20: Levski 0 Spartak Varna 0; Marek 0 CSKA 2.

BULGARIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	21	18	2	1	56	11	56
Levski	21	16	2	3	51	15	50
Lovech	21	13	4	4	41	17	43
Slavia	21	12	3	6	46	24	39
Cherno More	21	12	3	6	31	16	39
Lok Plovdiv*	21	12	2	7	43	27	35
Naftex	21	9	2	10	25	27	29
Spartak Varna	21	8	4	9	22	27	28
Lok Sofia	21	6	4	11	20	27	22
Marek	21	6	4	11	24	32	22
Chernomorets	21	6	2	13	24	45	20
Botev	21	5	3	13	22	52	18
Dobrudzha	21	3	1	17	14	60	10
Rilski Sportist	21	1	4	16	14	53	7

**3pts deducted for failing to fulfil fixture*

CROATIA

CROATIA: REGULAR SEASON – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	22	18	3	1	51	17	57
Hajduk	22	16	2	4	42	14	50
Varteks	22	15	0	7	40	21	45
Cibalia	22	9	5	8	28	28	32
Kamen Ingrad	22	7	9	6	23	22	30
Zagreb	22	8	6	8	28	30	30
Slaven	22	9	2	11	24	26	29
Osijek	22	6	5	11	21	39	23
Zadar	22	5	6	11	21	40	21
Rijeka	22	5	3	14	23	33	18
Pomorac	22	3	8	11	26	41	17
Sibenik	22	4	5	13	23	39	17

Top six qualified for championship play-offs

Championship play-offs

Apr 5: Hajduk 2 Kamen Ingrad 0; Varteks 1 Cibalia 0.
Apr 6: Dinamo 5 Zagreb 0.
Apr 12: Zagreb 1 Cibalia 1; Kamen Ingrad 1 Varteks 0.
Apr 13: Dinamo 0 Hajduk 1.
Apr 19: Hajduk 1 Zagreb 0; Varteks 0 Dinamo 3; Cibalia 3 Kamen Ingrad 2.

CROATIA – CHAMP'SHIP PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dinamo	25	20	3	2	59	18	63
Hajduk	25	19	2	4	46	14	59
Varteks	25	16	0	9	41	25	48
Cibalia	25	10	6	9	32	32	36
Kamen Ingrad	25	8	9	8	26	27	33
Zagreb	25	8	7	10	29	37	31

Teams carried forward all points and goals from regular season

CZECH REPUBLIC

Mar 29: Sparta 1 Brno 0.
Apr 5: Chmel Blsany 1 Sparta 2.
Apr 6: Liberec 2 Jablonec 0; Zlin 1 Pribram 0; Hradec Kralove 2 Olomouc 1; Ostrava 2 Bohemians 0; Slavia 6 Ceske Budejovice 1; Brno 4 Synot 1.
Apr 7: Zizkov 2 Teplice 0.
Apr 12: Sparta 2 Slavia 0.
Apr 13: Bohemians 0 Chmel Blsany 0; Jablonec 0 Hradec Kralove 0; Olomouc 1 Zlin 0; Ceske Budejovice 3 Liberec 3; Teplice 1 Brno 1; Synot 3 Ostrava 1.
Apr 14: Pribram 1 Zizkov 0.
Apr 19: Pribram 2 Sparta 2.
Apr 20: Jablonec 0 Olomouc 0; Zlin 1 Bohemians 0; Ostrava 0 Liberec 1; Hradec Kralove 0 Teplice 0; Zizkov 1 Ceske Budejovice 0; Chmel Blsany 0 Brno 1.
Apr 21: Slavia 3 Synot 1.

CZECH REPUBLIC

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sparta	24	17	4	3	42	12	55
Slavia	24	14	8	2	51	18	50
Liberec	24	13	3	8	37	32	42
Zizkov	24	12	5	7	32	27	41
Teplice	24	11	5	8	27	26	38
Ostrava	24	11	4	9	34	27	37
Synot	24	9	5	10	29	32	32
Pribram	24	8	7	9	30	27	31
Zlin	24	7	8	9	24	32	29
Brno	24	7	7	10	26	26	28
Ceske Budejovice	24	8	4	12	31	44	28
Olomouc	24	6	8	10	20	24	26
Jablonec	24	5	11	8	23	33	26
Chmel Blsany	24	7	4	13	23	30	25
Bohemians	24	4	7	13	30	47	19
Hradec Kralove	24	2	12	10	19	41	18

DENMARK

Apr 5: Midtjylland 2 AaB 1.
Apr 6: Esbjerg 4 AGF 1; Farum 2 AB 0; Koge 2 Viborg 0; FC Copenhagen 1 Brondby 1; Silkeborg 1 OB 1.
Apr 12: OB 1 Brondby 1.
Apr 13: AaB 1 Farum 2; AB 3 Koge 1; FC Copenhagen 1 Esbjerg 0; Viborg 0 Silkeborg 0; AGF 3 Midtjylland 2.
Apr 16: AaB 2 AGF 0.
Apr 17: Brondby 2 Koge 1; AB 1 Esbjerg 4; OB 2 Farum 2; Silkeborg 3 FC Copenhagen 0; Viborg 0 Midtjylland 0.
Apr 20: Farum 1 Brondby 1.
Apr 21: Esbjerg 1 Viborg 5; Midtjylland 2 OB 2; Koge 1 Silkeborg 3; FC Copenhagen 0 AaB 1; AGF 1 AB 2.

DENMARK

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Copenhagen	24	12	7	5	34	25	43
Brondby	24	11	8	5	45	25	41
Farum	23	12	2	9	36	40	38
Midtjylland	24	9	8	7	36	30	35
Esbjerg	24	9	7	8	47	46	34
OB	24	8	9	7	39	33	33
AaB	24	10	3	11	31	33	33
AB	24	7	8	9	31	33	29
Silkeborg	24	7	7	10	33	35	28
Viborg	24	6	8	10	38	43	26
AGF	23	7	5	11	33	45	26
Koge	24	8	2	14	37	52	26

ENGLAND

Saturday, April 5

Aston Villa 1 (Toure og 71)
Arsenal 1 (Ljungberg 56) Att: 42,602

Bolton 2 (Pedersen 32, Ivan Campo 52)
Manchester City 0 Att: 26,949

Charlton 1 (Euell pen 45)
Leeds 6 (Kewell 12, 76, Harte pen 34, Viduka 42, 53, pen 56) Att: 26,274

Manchester Utd 4 (Van Nistelrooy pen 5, pen 66, Giggs 78, Solskjaer 90)
Liverpool 0 Att: 67,639

Middlesbrough 3 (Christie 36, Greening 76, Nemeth 87)
West Brom 0 Att: 30,187

Southampton 1 (Beattie 44)
West Ham 1 (Defoe 83) Att: 31,941

Sunderland 1 (Thornton 12)
Chelsea 2 (Zola 52, Cole 85) Att: 40,011

Tottenham 2 (Keane 7, Poyet 88)
Birmingham 1 (Devlin pen 77) Att: 36,058

Sunday, April 6

Everton 2 (Rooney 18, Unsworth pen 65)
Newcastle 1 (Robert 40) Att: 40,031

Monday, April 7

Fulham 0
Blackburn 4 (Dunn pen 37, Hakan 42, 54, Duff 53) Att: 14,017

Saturday, April 12

Birmingham 2 (Hughes 43, Dugarry 60)
Sunderland 0 Att: 29,132

Blackburn 1 (Duff 34)
Charlton 0 Att: 27,506

Chelsea 1 (Cole 58)
Bolton 0 Att: 39,852

Leeds 2 (Viduka 31, 76)
Tottenham 2 (Sheringham 37, Keane 39) Att: 39,560

Liverpool 2 (Heskey 36, Owen 59)
Fulham 0 Att: 42,120

Manchester City 0
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 34,793

Newcastle 2 (Jenas 21, Ameobi 89)
Manchester Utd 6 (Solskjaer 32, Scholes 34, 38, 52, Giggs 44, Van Nistelrooy pen 58) Att: 52,164

West Brom 1 (Balis pen 18)
Everton 2 (Weir 23, Campbell 45) Att: 27,039

West Ham 2 (Sinclair 15, Kanoute 65)
Aston Villa 2 (Vassell pen 36, Leonhardsen 53) Att: 35,029

Wednesday, April 16

Arsenal 2 (Henry 52, 62)
Manchester Utd 2 (Van Nistelrooy 23, Giggs 63) Att: 38,164

Friday, April 18

Tottenham 0
Manchester City 2 (Sommeil 3, Barton 21) Att: 36,075

Saturday, April 19

Aston Villa 2 (Allback 11, 78)
Chelsea 1 (Terry 89) Att: 39,358

Bolton 1 (Okocha 38)
West Ham 0 Att: 27,160

Charlton 0
Birmingham 2 (Dugarry 20, Savage pen 55) Att: 25,732

Everton 1 (Unsworth pen 59)
Liverpool 2 (Owen 31, Murphy 64) Att: 40,162

Fulham 2 (Legwinski 69, Clark 86)
Newcastle 1 (Shearer 40) Att: 17,900

Manchester Utd 3 (Van Nistelrooy 20, Scholes 42, 61)
Blackburn 1 (Berg 24) Att: 67,626

Middlesbrough 0
Arsenal 2 (Wiltord 48, Henry 82) Att: 34,724

Southampton 3 (Ormerod 31, Beattie 45, A Svensson 53)
Leeds 2 (Kewell 80, Barmby 90) Att: 32,032

Sunderland 1 (Stewart 70)
West Brom 2 (McInnes 39, 42) Att: 36,025

Monday, April 21

Birmingham 3 (Dugarry 75, 82, Hughes 79)
Southampton 2 (A Svensson 26, Ormerod 77) Att: 29,115

Blackburn 0
Bolton 0 Att: 28,862

Chelsea 4 (Gudjohnsen 25, Hasselbaink 48, Gronkjaer 62, Zola 90)
Everton 1 (Carsley 77) Att: 40,875

Liverpool 2 (Hyypia 86, Gerrard 90)
Charlton 1 (Bartlett 47) Att: 42,010

Manchester City 3 (Foe 36, 80, Fowler 38)
Sunderland 0 Att: 34,357

Newcastle 1 (Solano 37)
Aston Villa 1 (Dublin 69) Att: 52,015

West Brom 2 (Dichio 24, Clement 61)
Tottenham 3 (Keane 45, 85, Sheringham 63) Att: 26,899

West Ham 1 (Sinclair 77)
Middlesbrough 0 Att: 35,019

Tuesday, April 22

Leeds 2 (Viduka 4, 49)
Fulham 0 Att: 37,220

ENGLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	35	22	8	5	66	32	74
Arsenal	34	21	8	5	71	36	71
Chelsea	35	18	9	8	65	35	63
Newcastle	35	19	5	11	59	46	62
Liverpool	35	17	10	8	53	37	61
Everton	35	16	8	11	45	44	56
Blackburn	35	14	11	10	44	40	53
Tottenham	35	14	8	13	50	51	50
Southampton	34	12	12	10	40	38	48
Man City	35	14	6	15	45	51	48
Middlesbrough	35	12	10	13	42	38	46
Charlton	35	13	7	15	42	50	46
Birmingham	35	12	8	15	36	46	44
Aston Villa	35	11	9	15	39	42	42
Leeds	35	12	5	18	50	51	41
Fulham	35	11	8	16	37	49	41
Bolton	35	9	12	14	37	48	39
West Ham	35	8	11	16	38	57	35
West Brom	35	6	6	23	26	56	24
Sunderland	35	4	7	24	21	59	19

LEADING GOALSCORERS
22 James Beattie (Southampton)
22 Thierry Henry (Arsenal)
20 Ruud Van Nistelrooy (Manchester Utd)

FA CUP – semi-finals

Apr 13: Sheffield Utd 0 Arsenal 1; Southampton 2 Watford 1.

FRANCE

Saturday, April 5

Auxerre 1 (Fadiga 87)
Ajaccio 0 Att: 7,000

Bastia 1 (Maurice pen 39)
Troyes 1 (Nivet 86) Att: 7,448

Lens 1 (Moreira 89)
Strasbourg 1 (Ljuboja 90) Att: 38,233

Lyon 2 (Govou 38, Carriere 85)
Le Havre 1 (Lesage 43) Att: 39,652

Marseille 0
Guingamp 2 (Bah 12, Drogba 15) Att: 50,000

Nantes 1 (Gillet pen 48)
Lille 0 Att: 35,028

Rennes 3 (Piquionne 45, Delaye 86, Frei 87)
Bordeaux 4 (Darcheville 59, 81, Jay og 63, Pauleta 82) Att: 18,159

Sedan 1 (Asuar 45)
Montpellier 2 (Bamogo 10, Carotti 78) Att: 17,746

Sochaux 0
Paris SG 0 Att: 19,682

Sunday, April 6

Monaco 0
Nice 1 (Diawara 78) Att: 18,000

Tuesday, April 8

Auxerre 3 (Mwaruwari 33, 85, Cisse 90)
Sedan 1 (N'Diefi 61) Att: 14,500

Friday, April 11

Bordeaux 0
Lyon 1 (Anderson 61) Att: 32,177

Saturday, April 12

Ajaccio 2 (Robin 58, Lacombe 67)
Monaco 4 (Giuly 6, Prso 14, 19, Nonda pen 26) Att: 6,500

Guingamp 3 (Drogba 7, 52, Le Roux 40)
Bastia 0 Att: 15,448

Le Havre 0
Rennes 1 (Piquionne 25) Att: 11,945

Lille 0
Sedan 0 Att: 14,306

Montpellier 0
Sochaux 2 (Frau 36, Santos 54) Att: 12,177

Nice 1 (Everson 47)
Auxerre 0 Att: 16,000

Paris SG 0
Lens 1 (Moreira 46) Att: 43,284

Strasbourg 2 (Deroff 42, Martins 84)
Nantes 0 Att: 12,928

Troyes 0
Marseille 0 Att: 14,211

Saturday, April 19

Ajaccio 1 (Diomede 60)
Bordeaux 6 (Pauleta 38, 63, 83, Savio 73, Darcheville 80, Meriem 88) Att: 6,000

Auxerre 1 (Kapo 16)
Le Havre 0 Att: 7,000

Bastia 1 (Maurice 68)
Montpellier 2 (Robert 10, Doumeng 76) Att: 7,522

Lyon 0
Lille 0 Att: 40,083

Nantes 1 (Gillet 49)
Paris SG 1 (Toure 66) Att: 35,500

Rennes 2 (Delaye 24, Arribage 55)
Nice 2 (Bigne 16, Mionnet 68) Att: 17,307

Sedan 4 (H Camara 55, 65, 72, Asuar 67)
Troyes 0 Att: 17,867

Sochaux 0
Guingamp 0 Att: 17,563

Sunday, April 20

Lens 0
Marseille 1 (Leboeuf 33) Att: 40,627

Monaco 2 (Prso 19, Nonda 69)
Strasbourg 0 Att: 10,000

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monaco	34	17	10	7	55	27	61
Lyon	34	17	10	7	56	36	61
Marseille	34	17	8	9	35	29	59
Bordeaux	34	16	9	9	52	34	57
Sochaux	34	14	12	8	37	28	54
Auxerre	34	15	9	10	33	28	54
Nice	34	13	14	7	37	26	53
Nantes	34	15	8	11	36	32	53
Paris SG	34	13	11	10	45	32	50
Guingamp	34	15	5	14	47	44	50
Lens	34	11	15	8	37	29	48
Bastia	34	12	9	13	35	40	45
Strasbourg	34	10	11	13	36	46	41
Rennes	34	9	9	16	30	40	36
Montpellier	34	9	9	16	33	47	36
Lille	34	8	11	15	26	42	35
Le Havre	34	9	8	17	24	40	35
Sedan	34	9	7	18	36	51	34
Ajaccio	34	7	11	16	26	47	32
Troyes	34	6	10	18	21	39	28

LEADING GOALSCORERS
20 Pauleta (Bordeaux)
19 Shabani Nonda (Monaco)

GERMANY

Saturday, April 5

Bayer Leverkusen 4 (Butt pen 14, Schneider 31, Neuville 40, 69)
Hertha 1 (Preetz 76) Att: 22,500

Bochum 1 (Ramzy og 81)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Ramzy 90) Att: 23,146

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Amoroso 29)
Werder Bremen 2 (Haristeas 54, Ernst 86) Att: 68,600

Energie Cottbus 2 (Vagner 7, Juskowiak 84)
Stuttgart 3 (Meissner 1, Heldt 75, Ganea pen 90) Att: 12,529

Hamburg 1 (Hain og 10)
Arminia Bielefeld 0 Att: 46,160

Hannover 2 (Stajner 35, Vinicius 44)
Bayern Munich 2 (Sagnol 77, Pizarro 85) Att: 31,878

Nurnberg 0
Schalke 0 Att: 41,100

Sunday, April 6

Hansa Rostock 1 (Hill 3)
Wolfsburg 0 Att: 9,000

1860 Munich 2 (Schroth 79, Max 89)
Monchengladbach 0 Att: 20,000

Saturday, April 12

Arminia Bielefeld 2 (Wichniarek pen 14, 42)
1860 Munich 1 (Stranzl 20) Att: 21,070

Bayern Munich 0
Werder Bremen 1 (Micoud 14) Att: 63,000

Hamburg 1 (Romeo 65)
Borussia Dortmund 1 (Koller 68) Att: 55,432

Hertha 1 (Dardai 63)
Bochum 0 Att: 37,022

Kaiserslautern 1 (Dominguez 71)
Hansa Rostock 0 Att: 38,522

Monchengladbach 2 (Ulich 12, Forssell 56)
Nurnberg 0 Att: 30,000

Stuttgart 3 (Amanatidis 9, Hleb 17, Ganea 51)
Bayer Leverkusen 0 Att: 44,500

Sunday, April 13

Schalke 3 (Bohme 45, 61, Sand 54)
Energie Cottbus 0 Att: 60,886

Wolfsburg 1 (Klimowicz 55)
Hannover 0 Att: 30,000

Saturday, April 19

Borussia Dortmund 1 (Amoroso pen 61)
Bayern Munich 0 Att: 68,600

Energie Cottbus 1 (Latoundji 5)
Monchengladbach 1 (Pletsch 82) Att: 13,241

Hannover 2 (Krupnikovic 49, Bobic 60)
Kaiserslautern 1 (Klos 11) Att: 30,573

Hansa Rostock 0
Hertha 1 (Friedrich 50) Att: 23,500

1860 Munich 1 (Max 36)
Hamburg 1 (Fukal 65) Att: 22,000

Nurnberg 0
Arminia Bielefeld 0 Att: 21,400

Werder Bremen 0
Wolfsburg 1 (Biliskov 86) Att: 33,300

Sunday, April 20

Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Berbatov 9)
Schalke 3 (Bohme 12, Sand 61, Asamoah 90) Att: 22,500

Bochum 3 (Hashemian 40, 66, Christiansen 68)
Stuttgart 1 (Kuranyi 25) Att: 23,000

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	29	19	6	4	59	20	63
Stuttgart	29	15	7	7	47	34	52
B Dortmund	29	14	9	6	44	23	51
Hertha	29	14	6	9	43	31	48
Schalke	29	11	13	5	42	31	46
Hamburg	29	12	9	8	35	34	45
Werder Bremen	29	13	4	12	43	42	43
Wolfsburg	29	12	5	12	33	34	41
1860 Munich	29	10	8	11	37	44	38
Hannover	29	10	6	13	41	51	36
Kaiserslautern	29	9	8	12	37	37	35
Arminia Bielefeld	29	8	11	10	31	34	35
Bochum	29	9	7	13	44	50	34
Hansa Rostock	29	9	7	13	28	34	34
M'gladbach	29	9	6	14	31	39	33
B Leverkusen	29	8	6	15	37	49	30
Nurnberg	29	8	6	15	30	47	30
Energie Cottbus	29	6	6	17	29	57	24

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Ailton (Werder Bremen)
15 Thomas Christiansen (Bochum)
15 Giovane Elber (Bayern Munich)

GREECE

Mar 29: OFI 2 Ionikos 1.
Apr 5: Ionikos 4 PAOK 0; Aris 4 Akratitos 1; AEK 4 Proodeftiki 1.
Apr 6: Iraklis 0 Panathinaikos 3; Xanthi 3 Giannina 3; Kallithea 2 Aigaleo 1; OFI 1 Panionios 1; Panahaiki 1 Olympiakos 4.
Apr 12: Proodeftiki 0 Ionikos 0; Giannina 1 Kallithea 0; Akratitos 3 Panahaiki 0.
Apr 13: PAOK 2 Aris 0; AEK 6 Iraklis 1; Panathinaikos 1 Xanthi 0; Aigaleo 0 OFI 4; Panionios 0 Olympiakos 0.
Apr 19: Iraklis 2 Xanthi 0; Aris 2 Proodeftiki 1.
Apr 20: Ionikos 0 AEK 3; Kallithea 1 Panathinaikos 3; OFI 1 Giannina 0; Panahaiki 2 PAOK 2; Olympiakos 4 Aigaleo 0; Panionios 1 Akratitos 1.

GREECE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Panathinaikos	27	20	4	3	42	14	64
Olympiakos	27	18	7	2	64	20	61
AEK	27	18	5	4	64	27	59
Panionios	27	14	8	5	31	18	50
PAOK	27	14	5	8	51	33	47
Aris	27	13	6	8	33	29	45
Iraklis	27	13	4	10	37	32	43
OFI	27	11	8	8	36	27	41
Xanthi	27	7	11	9	27	26	32
Aigaleo	27	6	9	12	22	39	27
Proodeftiki	27	6	8	13	23	35	26
Kallithea	27	5	8	14	26	41	23
Akratitos	27	6	5	16	28	56	23
Ionikos	27	4	9	14	17	36	21
Panahaiki	27	1	6	20	11	65	9
Giannina*	27	5	7	15	22	36	-59

**81pts deducted (3pts for every game played to date) for non-payment of players*

HOLLAND

Saturday, April 5

Ajax 4 (Van der Vaart 36, Maxwell 40, Van der Meyde 45, Boukhari 90)
RBC 1 (Daelemans 77) Att: 49,182

De Graafschap 3 (Van Leerdam 52, Van Gastel 60, Van de Haar 64)
Feyenoord 4 (Van Persie 24, Buffel 40, Kalou 77, Van Hooijdonk pen 83) Att: 11,000

Heerenveen 3 (Jensen 47, 62, Denneboom 57)
Roda JC 2 (Vicelich 27, Soetaers 38) Att: 14,300

Twente 0
NAC 0 Att: 13,200

Vitesse 0
Groningen 0 Att: 23,200

Sunday, April 6

NEC 1 (Tumba 82)
Excelsior 0 Att: 10,150

RKC 2 (Cornelisse 34, Van Diemen 37)
AZ 0 Att: 6,141

Willem II 1 (Sektioui 62)
PSV 1 (Robben 55) Att: 13,820

Zwolle 3 (R Roelofsen 56, 74, 76)
Utrecht 1 (Kuijt 83) Att: 6,400

Friday, April 11

Roda JC 2 (Anastasiou 4, Sergio 24)
PSV 3 (Kezman 21, 60, Robben 42) Att: 17,000

Utrecht 1 (Gluscevic 81)
Willem II 1 (Landzaat 31) Att: 12,500

Saturday, April 12

AZ 1 (Perez 23)
Zwolle 1 (Promes 81) Att: 7,140

Feyenoord 2 (Van Persie 19, Lurling 90)
Vitesse 1 (Peeters 23) Att: 43,000

Heerenveen 2 (Nurmela 41, Samaras 74)
NEC 3 (Hersi 45, Demouge 54, Govedarica 56) Att: 14,400

Twente 3 (Cziommer 34, El Brazi 45, Cairo 61)
De Graafschap 0 Att: 13,175

Sunday, April 13

Groningen 1 (Van Gessel 77)
Excelsior 0 Att: 12,700

NAC 0
Ajax 3 (Sneijder 43, Van der Meyde 75, 84) Att: 15,700

RKC 1 (Hoogendorp pen 42)
RBC 2 (Den Ouden 14, Vos pen 68) Att: 5,000

Friday, April 18

Utrecht 4 (Kuijt 27, pen 35, pen 88, Jochemsen 90)
RKC 3 (Cornelisse 29, Hoogendorp 47, 49) Att: 14,600

Saturday, April 19

Ajax 4 (Ibrahimovic 16, Van der Vaart 18, Sneijder 27, Boukhari 82)
Roda JC 2 (Sergio 33, 80) Att: 49,421

Excelsior 1 (Boutahar 66)
Heerenveen 0 Att: 3,164

PSV 2 (Vennegoor of Hesselink 32, Kezman pen 60)
Twente 0 Att: 33,500

RBC 0
AZ 0 Att: 5,000

Willem II 3 (Ceesay 4, Jaliens 22, Shoukov 50)
De Graafschap 0 Att: 13,500

Sunday, April 20

Vitesse 1 (Peeters 13)
NEC 1 (Schuurman 47) Att: 24,196

Zwolle 1 (Bosschaart 49)
Feyenoord 3 (Buffel 6, Van Hooijdonk 14, 90) Att: 6,500

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
PSV	28	23	4	1	69	14	73
Ajax	28	20	5	3	73	27	65
Feyenoord	28	20	4	4	77	34	64
RKC	28	13	4	11	37	37	43
NEC	28	12	7	9	36	36	43
Utrecht	28	10	10	8	39	36	40
Roda JC	28	11	7	10	45	43	40
Willem II	28	10	8	10	41	36	38
AZ	28	10	7	11	40	56	37
NAC	27	8	12	7	28	25	36
Heerenveen	28	9	7	12	45	48	34
Twente	28	8	10	10	31	39	34
RBC	28	9	6	13	31	42	33
Groningen	27	6	8	13	25	36	26
Zwolle	28	6	6	16	26	57	24
Vitesse	28	5	7	16	25	43	22
Excelsior	28	5	7	16	29	50	22
De Graafschap	28	4	5	19	27	65	17

LEADING GOALSCORERS
28 Mateja Kezman (PSV)
24 Pierre Van Hooijdonk (Feyenoord)

DUTCH CUP – semi-finals

Apr 15: Utrecht 2 PSV 1.
Apr 16: Feyenoord 1 Ajax 0.

HUNGARY

Apr 5: Dunaferr 3 MTK 3; Siofok 1 Zalaegerszeg 0; Kispest-Honved 0 Gyor 2; Bekescsaba 0 Debrecen 3; Matav 0 Ujpest 1; Ferencvaros 1 Videoton 0.

HUNGARY: REGULAR SEASON – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ferencvaros	22	15	3	4	41	17	48
MTK	22	14	5	3	42	21	47
Ujpest	22	12	4	6	45	29	40
Debrecen	22	10	9	3	44	30	39
Siofok	22	8	8	6	28	27	32
Gyor	22	9	5	8	35	35	32
Zalaegerszeg	22	8	6	8	37	36	30
Videoton	22	7	6	9	29	30	27
Matav	22	6	5	11	33	36	23
Dunaferr	22	4	6	12	28	43	18
Kispest-Honved	22	4	3	15	27	51	15
Bekescsaba	22	4	2	16	25	59	14

Top six qualified for championship play-offs

Championship play-offs

Apr 11: Ferencvaros 2 MTK 1; Debrecen 0 Gyor 0.
Apr 12: Ujpest 0 Siofok 0.
Apr 18: Gyor 0 Ujpest 0.
Apr 19: Siofok 2 Ferencvaros 1; MTK 1 Debrecen 0.

HUNGARY – CHAMP'SHIP PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ferencvaros	24	16	3	5	44	20	51
MTK	24	15	5	4	44	23	50
Ujpest	24	12	6	6	45	29	42
Debrecen	24	10	10	4	44	31	40
Siofok	24	9	9	6	30	28	36
Gyor	24	9	7	8	35	35	34

Teams carried forward all points and goals from regular season

ITALY

Saturday, April 5

Juventus 2 (Comotto og 6, Tacchinardi 88)
Torino 0 Att: 59,826

Parma 1 (Adriano 77)
Milan 0 Att: 37,147

Sunday, April 6

Brescia 3 (Appiah 29, Baggio 44, Petruzzi 87)
Atalanta 0 Att: 20,025

Chievo 3 (Bjelanovic 10, Cossato 33, Pellissier 68)
Udinese 0 Att: 15,136

Inter 3 (Vieri 52, Recoba 59, Emre 77)
Roma 3 (Cassano 46, Di Biagio og 82, Montella 84) Att: 64,140

Lazio 3 (Fiore 7, Corradi 16, Claudio Lopez pen 68)
Como 0 Att: 33,618

Perugia 1 (Vryzas 31)
Bologna 1 (Signori 66) Att: 6,570

Piacenza 3 (Di Francesco 8, 64, Maresca 89)
Modena 3 (Milanetto pen 21, pen 23, Vignaroli 83) Att: 10,477

Reggina 1 (Nakamura pen 52)
Empoli 0 Att: 23,222

Saturday, April 12

Como 1 (Amoruso 28)
Perugia 1 (Miccoli 90) Att: 5,401

Inter 0
Milan 1 (Inzaghi 62) Att: 76,660

Sunday, April 13

Atalanta 1 (Doni 9)
Reggina 1 (Bonazzoli 54) Att: 16,758

Bologna 2 (Cruz 16, Locatelli 73)
Juventus 2 (Zambrotta 87, Camoranesi 90) Att: 36,178

Empoli 2 (Busce 19, Lucchini 61)
Chievo 1 (Bjelanovic 4) Att: 9,563

Modena 0
Lazio 0 Att: 13,821

Roma 2 (Totti 45, Guigou 74)
Parma 1 (Adriano 39) Att: 55,320

Torino 1 (Conticchio 57)
Piacenza 3 (Maresca 60, Di Francesco 83, Ferrarese 90) Att: 11,809

Udinese 0
Brescia 0 Att: 16,448

Saturday, April 19

Brescia 0
Inter 1 (Crespo 90) Att: 22,039

Chievo 2 (Cossato 24, Legrottaglie 74)
Reggina 1 (Cossato og 42) Att: 11,804

Juventus 2 (Del Piero pen 31, 39)
Roma 1 (Montella 44) Att: 42,592

Lazio 2 (Inzaghi 60, Corradi 74)
Piacenza 1 (De Cesare 45) Att: 32,280

Milan 0
Empoli 1 (Di Natale 12) Att: 57,884

Modena 3 (Kamara 13, Sculli 73, 85)
Bologna 2 (Signori 20, 46) Att: 17,000

Parma 1 (Mutu pen 75)
Torino 0 Att: 14,709

Perugia 1 (Pagliuca 78)
Atalanta 0 Att: 7,208

Udinese 3 (Jankulovski 45, Pinzi 74, Iaquinta 86)
Como 2 (Pecchia 58, Music 62) Att: 18,259

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Juventus	29	19	7	3	55	21	64
Inter	29	18	4	7	57	33	58
Milan	29	16	7	6	47	22	55
Lazio	29	13	13	3	50	28	52
Parma	29	13	9	7	48	31	48
Chievo	29	14	5	10	40	31	47
Udinese	29	12	7	10	30	32	43
Roma	29	10	9	10	46	40	39
Perugia	29	10	9	10	35	37	39
Brescia	29	8	13	8	31	31	37
Bologna	29	9	10	10	35	38	37
Modena	29	9	8	12	26	41	35
Empoli	29	9	7	13	33	41	34
Reggina	29	8	6	15	30	47	30
Atalanta	29	6	11	12	28	42	29
Piacenza	29	6	5	18	30	51	23
Como	29	3	11	15	25	49	20
Torino	29	4	7	18	19	50	19

LEADING GOALSCORERS
24 Christian Vieri (Inter)
15 Filippo Inzaghi (Milan)

ITALIAN CUP – semi-finals

2nd legs
Apr 15: Milan 2 Perugia 1 *Milan 2-1 on agg.*
Apr 16: Roma 1 Lazio 0 *Roma 3-1 on agg.*

NORWAY

Apr 12: Rosenborg 1 Valerenga 0.
Apr 13: Lillestrom 1 Bodo/Glimt 0; Aalesund 2 Tromso 3; Viking 3 Bryne 0; Sogndal 2 Stabaek 1; Odd Grenland 1 Molde 0.
Apr 14: Lyn 0 Brann 0.
Apr 21: Molde 4 Lillestrom 0; Stabaek 4 Odd Grenland 1; Tromso 2 Viking 2; Bryne 0 Sogndal 1; Bodo/Glimt 3 Lyn 2; Valerenga 3 Aalesund 1.
Apr 22: Brann 1 Rosenborg 6.

NORWAY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rosenborg	2	2	0	0	7	1	6
Sogndal	2	2	0	0	3	1	6
Viking	2	1	1	0	5	2	4
Tromso	2	1	1	0	5	4	4
Molde	2	1	0	1	4	1	3
Stabaek	2	1	0	1	5	3	3
Valerenga	2	1	0	1	3	2	3
Bodo/Glimt	2	1	0	1	3	3	3
Odd Grenland	2	1	0	1	2	4	3
Lillestrom	2	1	0	1	1	4	3
Lyn	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
Brann	2	0	1	1	1	6	1
Aalesund	2	0	0	2	3	6	0
Bryne	2	0	0	2	0	4	0

POLAND

Apr 5: Pogon 0 Amica 4; Legia 0 Gornik 0; Groclin 2 Wisla K 0; Ruch C 0 Odra 1; Garbarnia 0 Katowice 1; Widzew 1 Wisla P 0.
Apr 6: Zaglebie 2 KSZO 0; Lech 4 Polonia 1.
Apr 8: Katowice 1 Ruch C 0.
Apr 9: Odra 3 Zaglebie 0; Polonia 2 Garbarnia 1; Amica 1 Widzew 0; Wisla P 0 Lech 0; KSZO 1 Groclin 3; Wisla K 2 Legia 1; Gornik 9 Pogon 0.
Apr 12: Gornik 1 Amica 0; Pogon 0 Wisla K 1; Legia 6 KSZO 0; Ruch C 0 Polonia 0; Garbarnia 2 Wisla P 0; Lech 2 Widzew 1.
Apr 13: Groclin 3 Odra 0; Zaglebie 2 Katowice 0.
Apr 19: Amica 2 Lech 1; Widzew 1 Garbarnia 0; Wisla P 2 Ruch C 0; Polonia 2 Zaglebie 1; Katowice 0 Groclin 1; Odra 2 Legia 1; KSZO 0 Pogon 1; Wisla K 4 Gornik 0.

POLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wisla K	22	15	4	3	58	24	49
Odra	22	14	4	4	41	26	46
Groclin	22	13	6	3	39	21	45
Katowice	22	14	2	6	26	14	44
Legia	22	11	7	4	42	23	40
Gornik	22	8	8	6	37	23	32
Polonia	22	9	5	8	29	34	32
Amica	22	8	7	7	31	26	31
Lech	22	6	8	8	28	27	26
Ruch C	22	6	7	9	18	28	25
Wisla P	22	6	6	10	21	28	24
Zaglebie	22	6	5	11	25	29	23
Garbarnia	22	6	5	11	32	41	23
Widzew	22	5	6	11	19	32	21
KSZO	22	4	3	15	18	47	15
Pogon	22	2	3	17	12	53	9

PORTUGAL

Saturday, April 5

Moreirense 1 (Joao Duarte 35)
Boavista 1 (Luiz Claudio 73)

Pacos Ferreira 1 (Renato 39)
Benfica 3 (Nuno Gomes 10, 28, Simao pen 21)

Sunday, April 6

Academica 2 (Dario 41, Marinescu 50)
Nacional 2 (Alvarez 48, Cleomir 88)

FC Porto 3 (Marco Ferreira 35, Ricardo Pessoa og 71, Alenichev 76)
Setubal 0

Santa Clara 1 (Joao Pedro 68)
Uniao Leiria 3 (Maciel 63, 88, Hugo Almeida 86)

Sporting Braga 0
Maritimo 1 (Pepe 57)

Sporting Lisbon 1 (Hugo 61)
Guimaraes 1 (Fangueiro 14)

Varzim 1 (Paulo Vida pen 26)
Beira Mar 0

Monday, April 7

Belenenses 1 (Antchouet 45)
Gil Vicente 1 (Manoel 12)

Friday, April 18

Gil Vicente 1 (Gaspar 37)
Boavista 0

Uniao Leiria 0
Pacos Ferreira 1 (Serginho 46)

Saturday, April 19

Beira Mar 2 (Fary 22, 24)
Sporting Braga 2 (Wender 1, 46)

Maritimo 0
Sporting Lisbon 3 (Quiroga 26, Sa Pinto pen 53, Kutuzov 63)

Nacional 2 (Rossato 29, 57)
Santa Clara 1 (Ceara 80)

FC Porto 2 (Sergio Lomba og 37, Cesar Peixoto pen 60)
Moreirense 1 (Demetrios 76)

Setubal 3 (Nelson 19, Celino 32, Jorginho 74)
Academica 1 (Marinescu 17)

Monday, April 21

Benfica 2 (Argel 41, Tiago 66)
Varzim 1 (Rui Baiao 55)

Guimaraes 1 (Guga 68)
Belenenses 0

PORTUGAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FC Porto	28	24	3	1	61	21	75
Benfica	28	19	5	4	59	21	62
Sporting Lisbon	28	16	5	7	44	28	53
Guimaraes	28	13	7	8	43	34	46
Gil Vicente	28	13	4	11	38	38	43
Uniao Leiria	28	10	8	10	39	39	38
Belenenses	28	9	8	11	36	39	35
Nacional	28	8	10	10	33	37	34
Pacos Ferreira	28	9	7	12	29	39	34
Maritimo	28	10	4	14	30	43	34
Moreirense	28	7	11	10	35	37	32
Boavista	28	7	11	10	26	28	32
Varzim	28	9	5	14	31	37	32
Sporting Braga	28	7	11	10	25	38	32
Santa Clara	28	6	9	13	33	44	27
Academica	28	6	9	13	30	44	27
Setubal	28	5	11	12	31	41	26
Beira Mar	28	6	8	14	32	47	26

LEADING GOALSCORERS
17 Simao Sabrosa (Benfica)
14 Adriano (Nacional)
14 Fary Faye (Beira Mar)
14 Eric Gaucho (Maritimo)

PORTUGUESE CUP – semi-finals

Apr 13: Uniao Leiria 1 Pacos Ferreira 0.
Apr 14: FC Porto 2 Naval 1° de Maio 0.

ROMANIA

Apr 5: Ceahlaul 0 Bacau 0; Arges 2 Dinamo 0; Gloria 2 Poli AEK 0; National 0 Brasov 2; UTA 3 Otelul 0; Farul 1 Sportul 0.
Apr 6: Steaua 1 Astra 0; Rapid 0 U Craiova 2.

Apr 12: Bacau 0 Steaua 1; Astra 2 Arges 1; U Craiova 2 Gloria 0; Brasov 2 UTA 1; Otelul 2 Farul 2; Sportul 0 Ceahlaul 1.
Apr 13: Dinamo 0 Rapid 2; Poli AEK 1 National 2.
Apr 16: Ceahlaul 1 Steaua 0; Arges 3 Bacau 1; Rapid 3 Astra 1; Gloria 1 Dinamo 0; National 1 U Craiova 2; UTA 0 Poli AEK 1; Farul 0 Brasov 1; Sportul 2 Otelul 0.
Apr 19: Astra 2 Gloria 0; Dinamo 1 National 1; U Craiova 1 UTA 1; Poli AEK 2 Farul 1; Brasov 3 Sportul 2; Otelul 0 Ceahlaul 0.
Apr 20: Bacau 2 Rapid 1; Steaua 1 Arges 0.

ROMANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rapid	23	16	2	5	47	19	50
Steaua	23	12	6	5	26	18	42
Brasov	23	11	5	7	29	25	38
National	23	11	4	8	36	25	37
Gloria	23	10	5	8	26	21	35
Ceahlaul	23	8	8	7	31	25	32
Astra	23	10	2	11	31	33	32
U Craiova	23	8	7	8	25	28	31
Dinamo	23	9	3	11	35	35	30
Bacau	23	8	6	9	23	23	30
Farul	23	9	3	11	25	34	30
Arges	23	8	4	11	27	30	28
Otelul	23	7	7	9	21	31	28
Poli AEK	23	9	1	13	29	40	28
Sportul	23	7	4	12	27	34	25
UTA	23	6	3	14	23	40	21

RUSSIA

Apr 5: Torpedo-Metallurg 0 Dinamo 1.
Apr 6: Torpedo Moscow 1 Chernomorets 1; CSKA 3 Moscow Spartak 2; Spartak-Alaniya 1 Rotor 0; Kryliya Sovetov 0 Rubin 0; Uralan 0 Saturn 0; Zenit 0 Rostov 0; Shinnik 1 Lokomotiv 1.
Apr 11: Lokomotiv 1 Torpedo Moscow 2; Rostov 1 Uralan 0.
Apr 12: Chernomorets 1 Zenit 0; Saturn 2 Shinnik 1; Rubin 4 Spartak-Alaniya 0; Rotor 2 Torpedo-Metallurg 2; Dinamo 2 CSKA 3.
Apr 13: Moscow Spartak 1 Kryliya Sovetov 1.
Apr 19: CSKA 0 Rostov 1; Torpedo-Metallurg 2 Saturn 3; Spartak-Alaniya 3 Lokomotiv 2; Kryliya Sovetov 1 Chernomorets 1; Uralan 1 Moscow Spartak 2; Zenit 1 Rubin 0; Shinnik 0 Dinamo 0.
Apr 20: Torpedo Moscow 0 Rotor 3.
Apr 23: Chernomorets 0 CSKA 1; Rostov 3 Spartak-Alaniya 1; Saturn 1 Kryliya Sovetov 1; Moscow Spartak 1 Zenit 1; Rubin 0 Uralan 0.
Apr 24: Lokomotiv 1 Torpedo-Metallurg 0; Rotor 0 Shinnik 0; Dinamo 1 Torpedo Moscow 2.

RUSSIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
CSKA	6	5	0	1	13	6	15
Rostov	6	3	3	0	7	3	12
Saturn	6	3	2	1	9	6	11
Zenit	6	3	2	1	6	4	11
Dinamo	6	3	1	2	7	6	10
Spartak-Alaniya	6	3	0	3	7	11	9
Rubin	6	2	2	2	5	5	8
Torpedo Moscow	6	2	2	2	6	9	8
Kryliya Sovetov	6	1	4	1	7	5	7
Chernomorets	6	1	4	1	5	5	7
Lokomotiv	6	2	1	3	8	9	7
Moscow Spartak	6	1	3	2	7	8	6
Shinnik	6	0	5	1	4	5	5
Rotor	6	1	2	3	6	8	5
Uralan	6	0	3	3	3	6	3
Torpedo-Metallurg	6	0	2	4	4	8	2

SCOTLAND

Saturday, April 5

Dunfermline 3 (Hampshire 18, Nicholson 50, Hunt 77)
Motherwell 0 Att: 4,086

Hearts 2 (Webster 69, Kirk 78)
Dundee Utd 1 (Griffin 40) Att: 9,663

Kilmarnock 6 (McDonald 11, McSwegan 24, 42, 47, 62, Boyd pen 90)
Hibernian 2 (Murray 18, Jack 83) Att: 5,558

Livingston 1 (Lovell 2)
Aberdeen 2 (Derek Young 29, Sheerin 31) Att: 5,731

Rangers 2 (Mols 70, 75)
Partick 0 Att: 49,472

Sunday, April 6

Dundee 1 (Burchill 20)
Celtic 1 (Thompson 11) Att: 9,013

Saturday, April 12

Aberdeen 1 (Sheerin 10)
Dunfermline 0 Att: 10,033

Hibernian 2 (Orman 44, Riordan 53)
Livingston 2 (Wilson 87, O'Brien 89) Att: 8,150

Motherwell 1 (McFadden 77)
Dundee 2 (Burchill 2, Milne 24) Att: 4,693

Partick 1 (Mitchell 73)
Hearts 1 (Pressley 79) Att: 5,288

Sunday, April 13

Celtic 2 (Larsson 20, Petrov 73)
Kilmarnock 0 Att: 56,966

Dundee Utd 1 (Dodds 71)
Rangers 4 (De Boer 11, 45, Arveladze 18, 69) Att: 10,271

Saturday, April 19

Hearts 2 (Stamp 73, McCann 90)
Celtic 1 (Larsson 59) Att: 15,855

SCOTLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	33	28	3	2	86	23	87
Celtic	32	25	4	3	77	22	79
Hearts	33	16	9	8	55	47	57
Kilmarnock	33	14	8	11	43	46	50
Dunfermline	33	13	5	15	48	56	44
Dundee	33	10	12	11	44	48	42
Hibernian	33	11	6	16	46	58	39
Aberdeen	33	9	10	14	32	48	37
Livingston	33	8	8	17	41	50	32
Partick	33	6	11	16	29	50	29
Dundee Utd	33	5	10	18	29	61	25
Motherwell	32	6	6	20	35	56	24

LEADING GOALSCORER
26 Henrik Larsson (Celtic)

SCOTTISH CUP – quarter-finals

Replays
Apr 9: Dundee 4 Falkirk 1 (aet); Rangers 3 Dunfermline 0.

Semi-finals

Apr 19: Rangers 4 Motherwell 3.
Apr 20: Inverness Caledonian Thistle 0 Dundee 1

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Mar 30: Zeta 0 Rad 0; Obilic 3 Javor 1; OFK 1 Hajduk K 0; Vojvodina 2 Radnicki O 0; Rudar P 1 Radnicki N 0; Partizan 1 Sutjeska 0; Zemun 1 Cukaricki 0; Red Star 1 Zeleznik 1; Mogren 1 Sartid 2.
Apr 5: Rad 0 Red Star 2; Mogren 0 Zemun 1; Sartid 2 Partizan 4; Zeleznik 1 Rudar P 0; Cukaricki 0 Vojvodina 0; Sutjeska 2 OFK 1; Radnicki N 1 Obilic 0; Radnicki O 2 Zeta 1; Hajduk K 0 Javor 0.
Apr 12: Hajduk K 2 Rad 0; Javor 1 Radnicki O 2; Zeta 3 Radnicki N 1; Obilic 2 Sutjeska 0; OFK 2 Cukaricki 2; Vojvodina 1 Zeleznik 1; Rudar P 0 Sartid 0; Partizan 4 Mogren 1; Zemun 1 Red Star 1.
Apr 19: Rad 1 Zemun 1; Mogren 2 Rudar P 0; Sartid 0 Vojvodina 1; Zeleznik 0 OFK 0; Cukaricki 2 Obilic 2; Sutjeska 1 Zeta 0; Radnicki N 0 Javor 2; Radnicki O 1 Hajduk K 0.
Apr 20: Red Star 2 Partizan 0.
Apr 23: Hajduk K 4 Radnicki N 0; Javor 0 Sutjeska 0; Obilic 1 Zeleznik 1; OFK 3 Sartid 1; Partizan 2 Zemun 1; Radnicki O 2 Rad 4; Rudar 1 Red Star 3; Vojvodina 3 Mogren 0; Zeta 2 Cukaricki 0.

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Partizan	27	23	2	2	71	32	71
Red Star	27	16	7	4	56	19	55
Vojvodina	27	15	5	7	43	23	50
OFK	27	15	5	7	45	29	50
Zeleznik	27	14	7	6	43	29	49
Sutjeska	27	14	4	9	31	26	46
Zeta	27	12	6	9	35	28	42
Obilic	27	11	8	8	35	25	41
Hajduk K	27	11	7	9	31	19	40
Zemun	27	10	6	11	33	33	36
Radnicki O	27	8	10	9	29	34	34
Sartid	27	7	11	9	34	39	32
Rad	27	7	8	12	30	38	29
Cukaricki	27	7	7	13	34	45	28
Javor	27	7	5	15	17	37	26
Rudar	27	4	6	17	15	45	18
Mogren	27	4	5	18	25	58	17
Radnicki N	27	2	3	22	16	64	9

SPAIN

Saturday, April 5

Betis 2 (Fernando 35, Arzu 64)
Valencia 0 Att: 34,000

Espanyol 0
Celta Vigo 0 Att: 17,800

Real Madrid 3 (Morientes 85, 90, Portillo 89)
Rayo Vallecano 1 (Luis Cembranos 8) Att: 68,000

Villarreal 2 (Jorge Lopez pen 56, Calleja pen 90)
Barcelona 0 Att: 23,000

Sunday, April 6

Alaves 0
Mallorca 0 Att: 13,725

Athletic Bilbao 1 (Ezquerro 83)
Atletico Madrid 0 Att: 39,000

Deportivo La Coruna 2 (Capdevila 43, Fran 82)
Real Sociedad 1 (Nihat 15) Att: 31,000

Osasuna 0
Malaga 1 (Romero 58) Att: 16,444

Racing Santander 1 (Javi Guerrero pen 42)
Sevilla 0 Att: 15,215

Valladolid 0
Recreativo 1 (Raul Molina 21) Att: 14,000

Saturday, April 12

Barcelona 2 (Saviola 2, Motta 24)
Deportivo La Coruna 4 (Scaloni 16, Makaay 50, 64, Sergio 75) Att: 68,844

Sevilla 3 (Reyes 9, Machlas 81, 89)
Villarreal 1 (Jorge Lopez 17) Att: 35,000

Sunday, April 13

Atletico Madrid 3 (Luis Garcia 74, Hibic 85, Aguilera 90)
Espanyol 3 (Tamudo pen 23, Lopo 58, Domoraud 78) Att: 45,000

Celta Vigo 1 (Mostovoi 44)
Betis 0 Att: 18,000

Malaga 1 (Canabal 84)
Valladolid 0 Att: 18,000

Mallorca 3 (Riera 2, Eto'o 53, 80)
Racing Santander 3 (Bodipo 1, 43, Javi Guerrero pen 7) Att: 17,000

Rayo Vallecano 1 (Bolic 84)
Athletic Bilbao 1 (Urzaiz 76) Att: 12,000

Real Sociedad 4 (Kovacevic 3, 20, Nihat 32, Xabi Alonso 34)
Real Madrid 2 (Ronaldo 33, Portillo 84) Att: 33,000

Recreativo 1 (Javi Garcia 3)
Alaves 0 Att: 18,000

Valencia 1 (Mista 7)
Osasuna 0 Att: 40,000

Saturday, April 19

Real Madrid 1 (Ronaldo 16)
Barcelona 1 (Luis Enrique 32) Att: 75,000

Valladolid 1 (Antonio Lopez 75)
Valencia 0 Att: 10,000

Villarreal 1 (Palermo 22)
Mallorca 1 (Eto'o 41) Att: 12,000

Sunday, April 20

Alaves 0
Malaga 1 (Dario Silva 90) Att: 12,087

Betis 2 (Alfonso 46, Arzu 84)
Atletico Madrid 2 (Luis Garcia 26, 75) Att: 35,000

Deportivo La Coruna 3 (Victor 41, Makaay pen 45, 70)
Sevilla 1 (Antonio 51) Att: 25,000

Espanyol 3 (Maxi Rodriguez 52, Milosevic 55, Roger pen 65)
Athletic Bilbao 3 (Ezquerro 3, Yeste 22, 30) Att: 13,700

Osasuna 0
Celta Vigo 2 (Hossam 14, 50) Att: 13,771

Racing Santander 1 (Pernia og 53)
Recreativo 0 Att: 15,044

Real Sociedad 5 (De Pedro pen 45, Karpin pen 51, Nihat 59, 88, Tayfun 90)
Rayo Vallecano 0 Att: 30,000

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	30	17	10	3	67	32	61
Real Sociedad	30	17	9	4	57	38	60
Dep La Coruna	30	18	6	6	52	33	60
Celta Vigo	30	15	6	9	36	24	51
Valencia	30	14	8	8	43	24	50
Sevilla	30	11	9	10	28	25	42
Betis	30	11	9	10	41	41	42
Atletico Madrid	30	10	11	9	43	39	41
Malaga	30	10	11	9	37	33	41
Athletic Bilbao	30	10	8	12	44	50	38
Mallorca	30	10	8	12	34	46	38
Barcelona	30	9	10	11	47	41	37
Villarreal	30	9	9	12	31	37	36
Racing Santander	30	11	3	16	38	46	36
Valladolid	30	10	5	15	28	33	35
Espanyol	30	8	9	13	35	42	33
Osasuna	30	7	9	14	27	38	30
Alaves	30	7	9	14	31	52	30
Recreativo	30	7	9	14	28	50	30
Rayo Vallecano	30	7	6	17	26	49	27

LEADING GOALSCORERS
24 Roy Makaay (Deportivo La Coruna)
17 Darko Kovacevic (Real Sociedad)
16 Nihat Kahveci (Real Sociedad)
16 Ronaldo (Real Madrid)

SWEDEN

Apr 5: Landskrona 2 IFK Gothenburg 1.
Apr 6: AIK 3 Enkopings 0; Orgryte 1 Helsingborgs 4.
Apr 7: Halmstads 2 Sundsvall 0; Hammarby 3 Elfsborg 0; Malmo 2 Orebro 0.
Apr 8: Osters 0 Djurgardens 4.
Apr 13: Sundsvall 2 AIK 1; Helsingborgs 0 Osters 3; Elfsborg 3 Orgryte 1.
Apr 14: Djurgardens 2 Halmstads 0; IFK Gothenburg 3 Malmo 0; Orebro 2 Hammarby 3.
Apr 15: Enkopings 1 Landskrona 1.
Apr 18: Halmstads 2 Orebro 3; Helsingborgs 2 Sundsvall 1; Orgryte 3 Enkopings 0.
Apr 21: Djurgardens 5 Elfsborg 0; Malmo 2 Landskrona 2; Osters 0 IFK Gothenburg 0.
Apr 22: Hammarby 1 AIK 1.

SWEDEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Djurgardens	3	3	0	0	11	0	9
Hammarby	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
Helsingborgs	3	2	0	1	6	5	6
Landskrona	3	1	2	0	5	4	5
AIK	3	1	1	1	5	3	4
IFK Gothenburg	3	1	1	1	4	2	4
Malmo	3	1	1	1	4	5	4
Osters	3	1	1	1	3	4	4
Halmstads	3	1	0	2	4	5	3
Orebro	3	1	0	2	5	7	3
Orgryte	3	1	0	2	5	7	3
Sundsvall	3	1	0	2	3	5	3
Elfsborg	3	1	0	2	3	9	3
Enkopings	3	0	1	2	1	7	1

SWITZERLAND

Championship pool

Apr 5: Servette 0 Neuchatel Xamax 0; Wil 1900 0 Young Boys 1.
Apr 6: Zurich 1 Basle 2; Thun 1 Grasshopper 2.
Apr 12: Basle 3 Wil 1900 1; Neuchatel Xamax 1 Thun 0.
Apr 13: Grasshopper 1 Servette 1; Young Boys 2 Zurich 1.
Apr 16: Zurich 2 Wil 1900 1.
Apr 17: Servette 3 Thun 1.
Apr 19: Basle 3 Young Boys 0.
Apr 21: Neuchatel Xamax 0 Grasshopper 1.

SWITZERLAND – CHAMPIONSHIP POOL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Grasshopper	7	5	2	0	15	5	42 [25]
Basle	7	5	1	1	17	8	40 [24]
Young Boys	7	4	1	2	8	10	28 [15]
Neuchatel X	7	3	2	2	9	6	27 [16]
Servette	7	2	4	1	8	7	25 [15]
Zurich	7	1	2	4	7	11	21 [16]
Thun	7	0	2	5	5	13	18 [16]
Wil 1900	7	0	2	5	5	14	18 [16]

Teams carried forward half their points (figure in brackets) from regular season

TURKEY

Apr 5: Besiktas 2 Denizlispor 0; Samsunspor 2 Gaziantepspor 1; Genclerbirligi 3 Malatyaspor 0; Kocaelispor 2 Trabzonspor 2.
Apr 6: Bursaspor 0 Ankaragucu 2; Altay 5 Elazigspor 1; Adanaspor 3 Fenerbahce 1; Diyarbakirspor 1 Galatasaray 3; Istanbulspor 3 Goztepe 1.
Apr 11: Galatasaray 5 Altay 0.
Apr 12: Malatyaspor 1 Besiktas 2; Goztepe 3 Diyarbakirspor 0; Denizlispor 0 Samsunspor 1.
Apr 13: Elazigspor 4 Adanaspor 2; Gaziantepspor 2 Bursaspor 1; Fenerbahce 3 Genclerbirligi 3; Trabzonspor 0 Istanbulspor 0; Ankaragucu 2 Kocaelispor 0.
Apr 16: Diyarbakirspor 1 Besiktas 0; Denizlispor 1 Fenerbahce 1.
Apr 18: Goztepe 0 Galatasaray 1.
Apr 19: Istanbulspor 1 Ankaragucu 0; Genclerbirligi 2 Elazigspor 0; Samsunspor 1 Malatyaspor 1; Diyarbakirspor 2 Trabzonspor 0.
Apr 20: Adanaspor 5 Altay 2; Bursaspor 2 Denizlispor 0; Besiktas 2 Fenerbahce 0; Kocaelispor 0 Gaziantepspor 3.

TURKEY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Besiktas	28	20	7	1	52	17	67
Galatasaray	28	21	3	4	51	21	66
Genclerbirligi	28	19	6	3	69	28	63
Trabzonspor	28	12	10	6	40	25	46
Gaziantepspor	28	12	9	7	47	31	45
Fenerbahce	28	12	9	7	51	36	45
Malatyaspor	28	10	9	9	41	37	39
Ankaragucu	28	12	3	13	35	33	39
Diyarbakirspor	28	9	7	12	31	38	34
Istanbulspor	28	9	6	13	33	40	33
Samsunspor	28	9	6	13	31	46	33
Denizlispor	28	8	8	12	28	34	32
Adanaspor	28	7	8	13	34	48	29
Altay	28	8	5	15	37	60	29
Bursaspor	28	6	8	14	30	51	26
Elazigspor	28	6	7	15	29	51	25
Goztepe	28	5	9	14	27	45	24
Kocaelispor	28	5	4	19	26	51	19

UKRAINE

Apr 6: Vorskla 3 Karpaty 0; Kryvbas 1 Obolon 0; Volyn-1 1 Olexandria 0; Dynamo 2 Metalurh D 0; Shakhtar 4 Illichivets 2; Metalurh Z 1 Chornomorets 2; Tavriya 3 Dnipro 2.
Apr 7: Arsenal 1 Metalist 0.
Apr 12: Metalurh D 0 Shakhtar 2; Dnipro 0 Arsenal 0; Obolon 1 Volyn-1 1; Olexandria 0 Dynamo 2.
Apr 13: Karpaty 2 Metalist 0; Chornomorets 2 Tavriya 0; Illichivets 1 Metalurh Z 1; Vorskla 2 Kryvbas 1.
Apr 19: Arsenal 1 Chornomorets 0.
Apr 20: Kryvbas 2 Karpaty 1; Volyn-1 0 Vorskla 0; Dynamo 5 Obolon 3; Shakhtar 5 Olexandria 0; Metalurh Z 0 Metalurh D 1; Tavriya 0 Illichivets 0; Metalist 0 Dnipro 2.

UKRAINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Shakhtar	21	17	2	2	45	16	53
Dynamo	21	15	4	2	47	14	49
Arsenal	21	13	5	3	42	15	44
Dnipro	21	13	4	4	31	15	43
Metalurh D	21	12	4	5	28	18	40
Volyn-1	21	9	4	8	26	30	31
Kryvbas	21	6	7	8	18	22	25
Tavriya	21	7	3	11	22	33	24
Illichivets	21	5	6	10	24	30	21
Karpaty	21	5	6	10	20	26	21
Obolon	21	5	6	10	21	28	21
Vorskla	21	6	3	12	15	32	21
Chornomorets	21	6	2	13	17	30	20
Olexandria	21	4	8	9	18	32	20
Metalist	21	5	4	12	11	28	19
Metalurh Z	21	3	6	12	13	29	15

SOUTH AMERICA

LIBERTADORES CUP

1st rnd

Group 1

Apr 1 - Cali
Deportivo Cali (Col) 1 (Rojas og 26)
Emelec (Ecu) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Solorzano (Ven)

Apr 9 - Asuncion
Libertad (Par) 0
River Plate (Arg) 2 (D'Alessandro 81, Cavenaghi pen 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Larrionda (Uru)

Apr 17 - Asuncion
Libertad 1 (Fernandez 17)
Deportivo Cali 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Pozo (Chl)

Apr 17 - Buenos Aires
River Plate 2 (Fernandez 42, D'Alessandro 80)
Emelec 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Sent off: Rojas (Emelec) 56min

GROUP 1 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Deportivo Cali	6	4	0	2	9	3	12
River Plate	6	4	0	2	10	7	12
Libertad	6	2	1	3	9	9	7
Emelec	6	1	1	4	6	15	4

Group 2

Apr 15 - Asuncion
Cerro Porteno (Par) 1 (Aquino 74)
Sporting Cristal (Per) 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)

Apr 15 - Santiago
Universidad Catolica (Chl) 1 (Alvarez 87)
Paysandu (Bra) 1 (Sandro 89)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Carpio (Ecu)

GROUP 2 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paysandu	6	4	2	0	14	5	14
Cerro Porteno	6	2	2	2	8	11	8
Sporting Cristal	6	2	1	3	6	7	7
U Catolica	6	1	1	4	7	12	4

Group 3

Apr 16 - Asuncion
12 de Octubre (Par) 1 (Salinas 80)
America (Col) 4 (Vazquez 25, pen 77, Ferreira 38, L F Moreno 63)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Ponce (Chl)

LIBERTADORES CUP

Brazil quartet up against it

AN ELECTRIFYING second round of the Libertadores Cup seems sure to test the chances of the trophy returning to Brazil for the first time since 1999. The four Brazilian teams sailed through the group phase. But now all of them have to get past former champions to make it to the quarter-finals.

The glamour tie, between Corinthians and Argentina's River Plate, would be a worthy Final, while River's great Buenos Aires rivals, Boca Juniors, are also involved in an intriguing clash against Brazilian opposition. They face Paysandu, from the edge of the Amazon, who have exceeded all expectations in their Libertadores debut. Paysandu continued to surprise by beating Boca 1-0 away in the first leg of the second round.

Talent spotted...Nacional's Marcelo Guerrero

Santos' quest to win their first Libertadores since 1963 now pits them against Nacional, the sole survivors from Uruguay. The Santos wonderkids have so far comfortably cleared every obstacle placed in their path. Nacional, though, have an exciting new talent of their own in winger Marcelo Guerrero, who came to prominence at the start of the year in the South American Under-20 Championship. Nacional certainly proved a match for Santos in the second round first leg, drawing 4-4 at home.

The other Brazilian side, Gremio, drew first blood in their grudge second round match against defending champions Olimpia of Paraguay, winning 3-2 in Asuncion. The sides met in last year's semi-finals, when Olimpia made it through after a controversial penalty shoot-out. This year the Paraguayans have given further evidence of their resilience, winning their last two group matches when elimination threatened.

If the Brazilians emerge unscathed from the second round, then their main opposition could come from Colombia, whose three teams did well in the group phase. With their attacking approach, America took two beatings from Santos, but have sufficient ability to make the tie against Argentina's Racing Club an extremely attractive prospect. The well-organised Independiente of Medellin have already gained the edge over Paraguay's Cerro Porteno, beating the promising but raw young side 1-0 in Asuncion. And Deportivo Cali seek to continue their impressive form against Cruz Azul of Mexico.

Last year the two Mexican sides were the only teams to come through the group phase unbeaten. This year's pair both qualified despite losing all their away games. Pumas UNAM then failed at home, losing 1-0 against Chile's Cobreloa to make their task all the harder on their trip to the inhospitable Calama desert for the return.

Tim Vickery

Apr 16 - Santos
Santos (Bra) 1 (Oliveira 18)
El Nacional (Ecu) 1 (Bran 72)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Sequeira (Arg)

GROUP 3 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Santos	6	4	2	0	16	4	14
America	6	3	1	2	11	11	10
El Nacional	6	1	3	2	4	6	6
12 de Octubre	6	1	0	5	7	17	3

Group 4

Apr 8 - Calama
Cobreloa (Chl) 4 (Perez 5, Martel 8, Melendez 62, Dinamarca 86)
Alianza Lima (Per) 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)
Sent off: Garcia 50min, Olveira 70min (both Alianza); Fuentes (Cobreloa) 70min

Apr 8 - Asuncion
Olimpia (Par) 4 (Alvarenga 8, Lopez 63, 66, J C Benitez 88)
Gimnasia LP (Arg) 1 (Castillo 79)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Vazquez (Uru)
Sent off: Bustos (Gimnasia) 44min

GROUP 4 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cobreloa	6	2	3	1	9	5	9
Olimpia	6	2	3	1	9	6	9
Gimnasia LP	6	1	4	1	8	7	7
Alianza Lima	6	1	2	3	6	14	5

Group 5

Apr 2 - Porto Alegre
Gremio (Bra) 4 (Claudiomiro 24, Caio 43, Gilberto 61, Anderson 63)
Penarol (Uru) 1 (Bizera 46)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)

Apr 10 - La Paz
Bolivar (Bol) 1 (Gutierrez 63)
Gremio 0
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)
Sent off: Douglas (Gremio) 90min

Apr 10 - Mexico City
Pumas UNAM (Mex) 3 (Fonseca 40, 78, Trujillo 81)
Penarol 1 (De Souza 18)
HT: 1-1. **Ref:** Baldassi (Arg)
Sent off: Castro (Pumas) 80min; Estoyanoff (Penarol) 84min

GROUP 5 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gremio	6	3	1	2	10	7	10
Pumas UNAM	6	3	0	3	8	8	9
Bolivar	6	3	0	3	8	9	9
Penarol	6	2	1	3	12	14	7

Group 6

Apr 1 - Montevideo
Nacional (Uru) 3 (Mendez 23, Guerrero 51, Juarez 87)
Oriente Petrolero (Bol) 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Ponce (Chl)
Sent off: Justiniano (Oriente) 26min

Apr 8 - Santa Cruz
Oriente Petrolero 2 (Suarez 60, Biaggio 77)
Universitario (Per) 2 (P Cominges 65, Ferrari 74)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Reinoso (Ecu)

Apr 9 - Avellaneda
Racing Club (Arg) 4 (Peralta 12, Milito 22, Rueda 52, 69)
Nacional 1 (Benoit 77)
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Torres (Par)
Sent off: Peralta (Nacional) 6min

Apr 16 - Santa Cruz
Oriente Petrolero 0
Racing Club 1 (Rueda 19)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Cabrera (Uru)

Apr 16 - Lima
Universitario 2 (Sotil 56, P Cominges 59)
Nacional 2 (O'Neill 48, Guerrero 63)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Rezende (Bra)

GROUP 6 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Racing Club	6	4	2	0	11	4	14
Nacional	6	3	1	2	12	10	10
Universitario	6	1	4	1	8	8	7
Oriente	6	0	1	5	4	13	1

Group 7

Apr 3 - Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors (Arg) 2 (Delgado 1, 15)
Colo Colo (Chl) 2 (Espina pen 41, Quinteros 51)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Hidalgo (Per)
Sent off: Ramos (Colo Colo) 74min

Apr 3 - Guayaquil
Barcelona (Ecu) 2 (Brizuela 22, Fleitas 46)
Independiente Medellin (Col) 4 (Montoya 19, Molina 35, Moreno 71, 85)
HT: 1-2. **Ref:** Ortube (Bol)

Apr 10 - Medellin
Independiente Medellin 2 (Serna 4, 60)
Colo Colo 0
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Oliveira (Bra)

Apr 10 - Guayaquil
Barcelona 2 (Graziani 47, Morigi 59)
Boca Juniors 2 (Cangele 81, Moreno 90)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Selman (Chl)
Sent off: Asencio (Barcelona) 78min

GROUP 7 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Indep Medellin	6	4	0	2	9	6	12
Boca Juniors	6	3	2	1	10	7	11
Barcelona	6	1	2	3	8	10	5
Colo Colo	6	1	2	3	6	10	5

Group 8

Apr 2 - Sao Paulo
Corinthians (Bra) 6 (Gil 10, 88, Fabio Luciano 20, Leandro 21, Liedson 45, 63)
Fenix (Uru) 1 (Campora 82)
HT: 4-0. **Ref:** Aquino (Par)

Apr 3 - La Paz
The Strongest (Bol) 2 (Gigena 35, Coelho pen 88)
Cruz Azul (Mex) 1 (Zepeda 57)
HT: 1-0. **Ref:** Aros (Chl)
Sent off: Sartori (The Strongest) 59min

Apr 9 - Mexico City
Cruz Azul 4 (Palencia 5, Jimenez 43, Zepeda 53, Ortiz 86)
Fenix 0
HT: 2-0. **Ref:** Gimenez (Arg)

Apr 9 - La Paz
The Strongest 0
Corinthians 2 (Liedson 34, Leandro 40)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Gonzalez (Par)

GROUP 8 – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Corinthians	6	5	0	1	15	6	15
Cruz Azul	6	3	0	3	12	11	9
Fenix	6	2	0	4	10	14	6
The Strongest	6	2	0	4	6	12	6

Top two from each group qualified for 2nd rnd

2nd rnd, 1st legs

Apr 22 - Asuncion
Olimpia 2 (Lopez 26, Caballero 33)
Gremio 3 (Claudiomiro 19, Gilberto 63, Luis Mario 66)
HT: 2-1. **Ref:** Ruiz (Col)

Apr 23 - Asuncion
Cerro Porteno 0
Independiente Medellin 1 (Montoya 44)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Gimenez (Arg)
Sent off: Montoya (Independiente) 77min

Apr 23 - Montevideo
Nacional 4 (Alvez 56, Peralta 71, Scotti 81, Benoit 90)
Santos 4 (Alex 5, Ricardo Oliveira 44, pen 84, Robinho 64)
HT: 0-2. **Ref:** Elizondo (Arg)

Apr 24 - Buenos Aires
Boca Juniors 0
Paysandu 1 (Iarley 67)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Amarilla (Par)
Sent off: Rodriguez (Boca) 20min; Robson 20min, Vanderson 54min (both Paysandu)

Apr 24 - Mexico City
Pumas UNAM 0
Cobreloa 1 (Diaz 48)
HT: 0-0. **Ref:** Souza Mendonca (Bra)
Sent off: Sanchez 72min, A Gonzalez 84min (both Pumas); Veron (Cobreloa) 84min

Still to be played:
Cruz Azul v Deportivo Cali
America v Racing Club
River Plate v Corinthians

ARGENTINA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, March 28

Colon Santa Fe 1 (Carignano 38)
Independiente 1 (Pusineri 65)

Saturday, March 29

Chacarita Juniors 2 (Diaz 26, Cela Ruggieri 71)
Talleres Cordoba 1 (Real 12)

Huracan 1 (Cabrol pen 14)
Estudiantes 1 (Farias 74)

Lanus 2 (Galvan 31, Diaz 50)
San Lorenzo 3 (Acosta 49, 74, Astudillo 88)

Newell's Old Boys 2 (M Rosales 45, 90)
Nueva Chicago 2 (Ceballos 50, 72)

Sunday, March 31

Gimnasia LP 0
Boca Juniors 2 (Ibarra pen 54, Tevez 78)

Olimpo 2 (Castillo 5, 74)
Banfield 0

Racing Club 0
Union Santa Fe 2 (Islas 26, 82)

River Plate 3 (Cavenaghi 50, 66, D'Alessandro pen 77)
Arsenal 1 (S Gonzalez pen 89)

Velez Sarsfield 5 (Nanni pen 15, 35, Sena 43, Gracian 44, Valdemarin 81)
Rosario Central 2 (Carbonari pen 56, Figueroa 84)

Friday, April 4

Banfield 2 (Cervera 9, Jimenez 70)
Racing Club 3 (Orozco 17, Rueda 36, Milito 51)

San Lorenzo 1 (Paredes 68)
Gimnasia LP 1 (Morel Rodriguez og 5)

Saturday, April 5

Independiente 1 (Pusineri 40)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Rosario Central 1 (Carbonari pen 57)
Colon Santa Fe 1 (Toresani 12)

Sunday, April 6

Arsenal 0
Huracan 0

Boca Juniors 1 (Moreno 4)
Olimpo 1 (Carrario 69)

Estudiantes 1 (Gelabert 85)
Lanus 1 (Bustos Montoya 65)

Nueva Chicago 0
Velez Sarsfield 1 (Gracian 16)

Talleres Cordoba 1 (Real pen 33)
River Plate 3 (Pereyra 4, Coudet 58, D'Alessandro 66)

Union Santa Fe 0
Newell's Old Boys 2 (Grabinski 23, Adinolfi 90)

Friday, April 11

Olimpo 0
San Lorenzo 1 (Cordone 26)

Saturday, April 12

Arsenal 1 (Grondona 37)
Estudiantes 0

Chacarita Juniors 0
Rosario Central 3 (Messera 13, Figueroa 20, 23)

Velez Sarsfield 2 (Nanni pen 45, Bardaro 53)
Union Santa Fe 1 (Gimenez 36)

Sunday, April 13

Colon Santa Fe 2 (Arguello og 67, Capurro 83)
Nueva Chicago 0

Gimnasia LP 1 (Goux 55)
Lanus 2 (Bustos Montoya 36, 82)

Huracan 2 (Garipe 22, Gigena 26)
Talleres Cordoba 4 (Devallis 41, 45, Gandolfi 43, Gonzalez 69)

Newell's Old Boys 2 (Silvani 44, 53)
Banfield 1 (Rodriguez 69)

Racing Club 0
Boca Juniors 1 (Donnet 10)

River Plate 2 (Fuertes 72, Milito og 85)
Independiente 1 (Montenegro 14)

Friday, April 18

Independiente 2 (Insua pen 40, Silvera 56)
Huracan 1 (Villa 57)

Saturday, April 19

Banfield 2 (Ladino og 19, Colautti 41)
Velez Sarsfield 0

Nueva Chicago 3 (Carreno 6, 69, Amaya 30)
Chacarita Juniors 0

Sunday, April 20

Boca Juniors 2 (Battaglia 37, Estevez 65)
Newell's Old Boys 0

Estudiantes 2 (Zapata 10, Maggiolo 29)
Gimnasia LP 4 (Sanguinetti pen 27, 74, Enria 49, Sosa 82)

Lanus 1 (Alessandria 37)
Olimpo 0

Rosario Central 0
River Plate 2 (L Gonzalez 26, Cavenaghi 57)

San Lorenzo 3 (Michelini 11, Astudillo 29, Acosta 67)
Racing Club 1 (Mirosevic 3)

Talleres Cordoba 1 (La Paglia 24)
Arsenal 0

Union Santa Fe 0
Colon Santa Fe 0

ARGENTINA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
River Plate	10	8	1	1	23	7	25
Boca Juniors	10	8	1	1	18	6	25
Velez Sarsfield	10	7	1	2	15	7	22
Rosario Central	10	5	3	2	20	13	18
Racing Club	10	5	2	3	16	11	17
Colon Santa Fe	10	3	6	1	9	6	15
Olimpo	10	4	2	4	12	10	14
Nueva Chicago	10	4	2	4	16	16	14
Gimnasia LP	10	4	2	4	14	17	14
Newell's OB	10	3	4	3	13	14	13
San Lorenzo	10	3	4	3	15	17	13
Union Santa Fe	10	3	3	4	12	11	12
Talleres Cordoba	10	3	3	4	9	12	12
Estudiantes	10	3	2	5	11	13	11
Lanus	10	3	2	5	10	13	11
Arsenal	10	2	4	4	4	8	10
Independiente	10	2	3	5	9	17	9
Banfield	10	2	2	6	10	16	8
Chacarita Jnrs	10	2	2	6	6	12	8
Huracan	10	0	3	7	7	23	3

LEADING GOALSCORERS

8 Luciano Figueroa (Rosario Central)
8 Roberto Nanni (Velez Sarsfield)
6 Fernando Cavenaghi (River Plate)

BOLIVIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 26: Independiente 1 Oriente 1.
Mar 28: The Strongest 1 Iberoamericana 1.
Mar 29: Real Potosi 4 Oriente 0.
Mar 30: Blooming 1 Aurora 0; Guabira 0 Bolivar 4; Union Central 0 San Jose 0; Jorge Wilstermann 3 Independiente 0.
Apr 4: Independiente 2 Real Potosi 2.
Apr 5: Bolivar 4 Blooming 1; Iberoamericana 1 Guabira 0.
Apr 6: Aurora 2 Union Central 1; San Jose 0 Jorge Wilstermann 1.
Apr 11: Aurora 3 San Jose 3.
Apr 12: The Strongest 6 Independiente 1.
Apr 13: Blooming 6 Iberoamericana 0; Guabira 1 Oriente 2; Real Potosi 1 Jorge Wilstermann 1; Union Central 0 Bolivar 0.
Apr 16: Real Potosi 0 Bolivar 0.
Apr 19: Jorge Wilstermann 0 The Strongest 0.
Apr 20: Bolivar 4 Aurora 2; Iberoamericana 2 Union Central 2; Independiente 2 Guabira 1; Oriente 2 Blooming 2; San Jose 2 Real Potosi 0.

BOLIVIA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bolivar	7	4	3	0	16	3	15
J Wilstermann	7	4	2	1	13	7	14
Blooming	7	4	1	2	16	11	13
San Jose	7	3	2	2	12	9	11
Iberoamericana	7	3	2	2	13	14	11
The Strongest	6	2	4	0	12	6	10
Union Central	7	1	5	1	9	8	8
Real Potosi	7	1	4	2	8	11	7
Aurora	7	1	3	3	11	14	6
Oriente	6	1	2	3	8	13	5
Independiente	7	1	2	4	6	20	5
Guabira	7	0	2	5	4	12	2

BRAZIL

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 29: Guarani 4 Vasco da Gama 2; Atletico Paranaense 2 Gremio 0.
Mar 30: Goias 2 Paysandu 2; Corinthians 0 Atletico Mineiro 3; Flamengo 1 Coritiba 1; Criciuma 2 Fluminense 0; Juventude 2 Sao Paulo 2; Fortaleza 0 Bahia 0; Vitoria 1 Figueirense 1; Cruzeiro 2 Sao Caetano 2; Internacional 1 Ponte Preta 1 (awarded 1-0; Ponte Preta fielded ineligible player); Santos 2 Parana 2.
Apr 5: Fluminense 1 Fortaleza 1; Atletico Mineiro 0 Santos 0; Gremio 3 Guarani 1; Coritiba 0 Internacional 1.
Apr 6: Bahia 1 Flamengo 2; Vasco da Gama 6 Goias 4; Figueirense 3 Corinthians 3; Sao Paulo 2 Cruzeiro 4; Paysandu 1 Vitoria 2; Ponte Preta 1 Juventude 0; Parana 3 Atletico Paranaense 0; Sao Caetano 3 Criciuma 2.
Apr 9: Paysandu 2 Santos 1.
Apr 12: Corinthians 6 Paysandu 1; Internacional 2 Bahia 0; Atletico Paranaense 1 Atletico Mineiro 2; Santos 2 Figueirense 0.
Apr 13: Cruzeiro 3 Ponte Preta 0; Vitoria 2 Vasco da Gama 1; Flamengo 4 Fluminense 1; Criciuma 1 Sao Paulo 1; Fortaleza 1 Sao Caetano 1; Juventude 2 Coritiba 1; Guarani 2 Parana 0; Goias 1 Gremio 1.
Apr 16: Sao Caetano 1 Flamengo 1; Vasco da Gama 2 Corinthians 2; Bahia 3 Juventude 1; Gremio 2 Vitoria 1; Coritiba 3 Cruzeiro 4; Atletico Mineiro 3 Guarani 2; Figueirense 1 Atletico Paranaense 1; Ponte Preta 1 Criciuma 1.
Apr 17: Fluminense 3 Internacional 1; Parana 3 Goias 1; Sao Paulo 3 Fortaleza 1.
Apr 19: Flamengo 0 Santos 2; Bahia 2 Atletico Mineiro 4; Sao Caetano 1 Gremio 1.
Apr 20: Sao Paulo 3 Vasco da Gama 1; Fluminense 0 Parana 0; Cruzeiro 4 Goias 1; Internacional 2 Corinthians 1; Ponte Preta 4 Paysandu 4; Fortaleza 1 Atletico Paranaense 0; Juventude 1 Vitoria 1; Criciuma 1 Guarani 0.
Apr 21: Coritiba 1 Figueirense 0.

BRAZIL – NATIONAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cruzeiro	5	4	1	0	17	8	13
At Mineiro	5	4	1	0	11	4	13
Internacional	5	4	0	1	7	4	12
Parana	5	2	2	1	8	5	8
Santos	5	2	2	1	7	4	8
Sao Paulo	5	2	2	1	11	9	8
Flamengo	5	2	2	1	8	6	8
Criciuma	5	2	2	1	7	5	8
Gremio	5	2	2	1	7	6	8
Vitoria	5	2	2	1	7	6	8
Sao Caetano	5	1	4	0	8	7	7
Guarani	5	2	0	3	9	9	6
Fortaleza	5	1	3	1	4	5	6
Corinthians	5	1	2	2	12	11	5
Juventude	5	1	2	2	6	8	5
Ponte Preta	5	1	2	2	6	9	5
Fluminense	5	1	2	2	5	8	5
Paysandu	5	1	2	2	10	15	5
Coritiba	5	1	1	3	6	8	4
Vasco da Gama	5	1	1	3	12	15	4
Bahia	5	1	1	3	5	8	4
At Paranaense	5	1	1	3	4	7	4
Figueirense	5	0	3	2	5	8	3
Goias	5	0	2	3	9	16	2

CHILE

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 4: Santiago Wanderers 1 Dep Temuco 1.
Apr 5: Palestino 2 U Catolica 2; Cobreloa 2 Huachipato 1.
Apr 6: Rangers 3 Cobresal 3; U de Concepcion 3 Union Espanola 1; Puerto Montt 1 San Felipe 2; U de Chile 1 Audax Italiano 1; Coquimbo Unido 0 Colo Colo 4.
Apr 11: Audax Italiano 4 Rangers 4.
Apr 12: Union Espanola 1 U de Chile 1; U Catolica 0 U de Concepcion 0; San Felipe 0 Palestino 1.
Apr 13: Huachipato 1 Santiago Wanderers 0; Cobresal 4 Coquimbo Unido 0; Dep Temuco 2 Puerto Montt 3; Colo Colo 0 Cobreloa 2.
Apr 18: Cobreloa 2 Cobresal 1.
Apr 19: Puerto Montt 3 Huachipato 0; Santiago Wanderers 4 Colo Colo 3; Coquimbo Unido 1 Audax Italiano 0.
Apr 20: U de Concepcion 8 Palestino 2; U de Chile 3 U Catolica 2; Rangers 2 Union Espanola 2; Dep Temuco 3 San Felipe 0.

CHILE – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cobreloa	10	8	1	1	19	7	25
Huachipato	10	3	3	4	15	16	12
Palestino	10	3	1	6	14	24	10
Union Espanola	10	1	3	6	13	25	6

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Puerto Montt	10	5	2	3	15	14	17
U de Chile	10	3	6	1	22	15	15
San Felipe	10	2	2	6	8	20	8
Coquimbo Unido	10	2	2	6	7	19	8

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Audax Italiano	10	6	2	2	27	17	20
Cobresal	10	4	3	3	20	13	15
Rangers	10	1	9	0	20	16	12
Sant Wanderers	10	3	3	4	17	17	12

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colo Colo	10	4	4	2	20	13	16
U Catolica	10	3	5	2	17	14	14
U de Concepcion	10	3	3	4	18	16	12
Dep Temuco	10	3	3	4	13	19	12

COLOMBIA

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 30: Dep Pasto 1 Indep Santa Fe 0; Tolima 0 Dep Cali 2; Indep Medellin 4 Bucaramanga 0; Quindio 1 Pereira 0; Magdalena 1 At Junior 1; Millonarios 0 Tulua 0; Envigado 2 At Huila 2; Once Caldas 0 At Nacional 0; America 1 Centauros 1.
Apr 6: Indep Santa Fe 1 Centauros 0; At Huila 1 America 1; At Nacional 1 Envigado 0; Tulua 1 Once Caldas 1; At Junior 0 Millonarios 1; Pereira 1 Magdalena 0; Bucaramanga 1 Quindio 1; Dep Cali 2 Indep Medellin 2; Dep Pasto 0 Tolima 1.
Apr 9: Tolima 1 Indep Santa Fe 2; Indep Medellin 1 Dep Pasto 1; Quindio 0 Dep Cali 2; Magdalena 0 Bucaramanga 0; Millonarios 4 Pereira 1; Once Caldas 2 At Junior 1; Envigado 3 Tulua 2; America 3 At Nacional 2; Centauros 0 At Huila 0.
Apr 13: Indep Santa Fe 1 At Huila 2; At Nacional 2 Centauros 3; Tulua 0 America 0; At Junior 2 Envigado 0; Pereira 0 Once Caldas 0; Bucaramanga 2 Millonarios 1; Dep Cali 2 Magdalena 2; Dep Pasto 2 Quindio 0; Tolima 4 Indep Medellin 0.
Apr 20: Indep Medellin 2 Indep Santa Fe 0; Quindio 2 Tolima 2; Magdalena 1 Dep Pasto 0; Millonarios 2 Dep Cali 1; Once Caldas 1 Bucaramanga 0; Envigado 1 Pereira 2; America 2 At Junior 2; Centauros 3 Tulua 2; At Huila 2 At Nacional 1.
Apr 23: Tulua 2 At Huila 2; At Junior 1 Centauros 2; Pereira 1 America 1; Envigado 2 Bucaramanga 1; Dep Cali 0 Once Caldas 1; Dep Pasto 1 Millonarios 1; Tolima 0 Magdalena 0; Indep Medellin 2 Quindio 0; Indep Santa Fe 1 At Nacional 2.

COLOMBIA – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Once Caldas	15	9	5	1	19	7	32
America	15	7	6	2	28	20	27
Millonarios	15	6	7	2	19	11	25
At Junior	15	7	2	6	17	17	23
Dep Cali	15	6	4	5	23	20	22
Bucaramanga	15	5	7	3	18	16	22
Centauros	15	5	7	3	18	17	22
Indep Medellin	15	6	3	6	24	18	21
At Huila	15	4	8	3	19	20	20
Tolima	15	5	4	6	19	17	19
At Nacional	15	6	2	7	16	15	18
Envigado	15	5	3	7	16	19	18
Dep Pasto	15	4	5	6	11	13	17
Magdalena	15	4	5	6	17	21	17
Pereira	15	4	5	6	16	22	17
Indep Santa Fe	15	4	3	8	12	20	15
Tulua	15	1	8	6	14	22	11
Quindio	15	2	4	9	12	24	10

ECUADOR

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 28: Emelec 2 Aucas 1.
Mar 30: El Nacional 1 LDU Quito 1; Dep Cuenca 3 Manta 0; Tecnico Universitario 2 Dep Quito 0; Espoli 3 Barcelona 4;
Apr 5: Dep Quito 2 Dep Cuenca 2.
Apr 6: LDU Quito 1 Emelec 1; Aucas 1 Tecnico Universitario 1; Barcelona 2 El Nacional 0; Manta 4 Espoli 1.
Apr 12: El Nacional 4 Manta 1; Emelec 3 Tecnico Universitario 3.
Apr 13: Espoli 2 Dep Quito 1; LDU Quito 1 Barcelona 0; Dep Cuenca 2 Aucas 0.
Apr 19: Manta 0 LDU Quito 2; Aucas 2 Espoli 1.
Apr 20: Tecnico Universitario 0 Dep Cuenca 0; Dep Quito 1 El Nacional 4; Barcelona 2 Emelec 0.

ECUADOR – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Nacional	8	6	1	1	17	6	19
Barcelona	8	6	0	2	20	10	18
LDU Quito	8	4	4	0	14	9	16
Dep Cuenca	8	3	2	3	14	11	11
Emelec	8	2	3	3	9	15	9
Manta	8	3	0	5	9	18	9
Dep Quito	8	2	2	4	11	14	8
Aucas	8	2	1	5	9	11	7
Tecnico Univ	8	1	4	3	11	15	7
Espoli	8	2	1	5	13	18	7

PARAGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

1st stage

Mar 30: Sport Colombia 0 Libertad 1; Cerro Porteno 5 12 de Octubre 0.
Apr 3: San Lorenzo 0 Cerro Porteno 4 (last 20mins of game abandoned on Mar 1).
Apr 5: Olimpia 1 Libertad 1; Cerro Porteno 2 Guarani 2.
Apr 6: San Lorenzo 2 12 de Octubre 0; Sportivo Luqueno 4 Tacuary 1; Sol de America 1 Sport Colombia 1.
Apr 12: Libertad 0 Cerro Porteno 0; Tacuary 1 12 de Octubre 1.
Apr 13: Sol de America 4 San Lorenzo 1; Sport Colombia 1 Olimpia 1; Guarani 2 Sportivo Luqueno 4.
Apr 17: Olimpia 2 Sol de America 0.
Apr 20: San Lorenzo 1 Tacuary 2; 12 de Octubre 1 Guarani 1; Sportivo Luqueno 0 Libertad 1; Cerro Porteno 4 Sport Colombia 1.

PARAGUAY: OPENING 1ST STAGE – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Libertad	9	6	3	0	13	3	21
Cerro Porteno	9	5	3	1	20	8	18
Olimpia	9	4	4	1	16	11	16
Sol de America	9	3	4	2	12	7	13
Tacuary	9	4	1	4	15	16	13
Guarani	9	3	3	3	18	20	12
Sportivo Luqueno	9	3	2	4	14	12	11
Sport Colombia	9	2	2	5	14	20	8
12 de Octubre	9	1	4	4	8	18	7
San Lorenzo	9	1	0	8	10	25	3

Top six qualify for championship play-offs

PERU

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 29: Universitario 3 Coronel Bolognesi 0.
Apr 5: Alianza Lima 0 Cienciano 0; Dep Wanka 2 Universitario 2.
Apr 6: Sporting Cristal 5 At Universidad 0; Coronel Bolognesi 2 Union Huaral 0; Melgar 1 Estudiantes 1; Alianza Atletico 1 Sport Boys 1.
Apr 12: Universitario 1 Sporting Cristal 1.
Apr 13: Sport Boys 2 Coronel Bolognesi 2; Cienciano 0 Dep Wanka 1; Estudiantes 0 Alianza Lima 1; Union Huaral 1 Melgar 0; At Universidad 1 Alianza Atletico 1.
Apr 19: Sporting Cristal 6 Union Huaral 1.
Apr 20: Alianza Lima 1 At Universidad 0; Coronel Bolognesi 2 Cienciano 1; Melgar 0 Universitario 0; Alianza Atletico 1 Estudiantes 0; Dep Wanka 0 Sport Boys 0.
Apr 23: Sporting Cristal 4 Melgar 0; Universitario 1 Sport Boys 0; Union Huaral 0 Cienciano 0; Dep Wanka 1 Alianza Atletico 2; At Universidad 0 Estudiantes 1.

PERU – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting Cristal	8	6	1	1	22	5	19
Alianza Lima	7	5	2	0	10	2	17
Alianza Atletico	8	2	5	1	9	9	11
Coronel Bolognesi	7	3	2	2	10	11	11
Union Huaral	8	3	2	3	9	16	11
Universitario	8	2	4	2	9	8	10
Sport Boys	8	2	4	2	12	12	10
Cienciano	8	2	3	3	6	6	9
Dep Wanka	8	2	2	4	8	10	8
At Universidad	8	2	2	4	9	13	8
Estudiantes	8	2	1	5	7	11	7
Melgar	8	1	2	5	6	14	5

URUGUAY

OPENING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 4: Defensor 1 Danubio 1.
Apr 5: Wanderers 2 Tacuarembo 0; Dep Maldonado 2 Penarol 3.
Apr 6: Liverpool 0 Dep Colonia 1; Nacional 2 Miramar Misiones 0; River Plate 2 Bella Vista M 4; Juventud 1 Villa Espanola 3; Central Espanol 1 Plaza 0.
Apr 12: Danubio 1 Dep Maldonado 1; Tacuarembo 0 Plaza 0.
Apr 13: Fenix 4 Dep Colonia 3; Nacional 1 Liverpool 0; River Plate 1 Wanderers 1; Juventud 1 Miramar Misiones 3; Villa Espanola 2 Central Espanol 2; Cerro 2 Defensor 1.
Apr 15: Penarol 1 Bella Vista M 0.
Apr 16: Fenix 2 Cerro 3.
Apr 19: Tacuarembo 1 Defensor 3; Plaza 1 Liverpool 2; Villa Espanola 2 Penarol 2.
Apr 20: Wanderers 4 Dep Colonia 1; Fenix 0 Nacional 3; River Plate 4 Juventud 1; Miramar Misiones 1 Danubio 0; Bella Vista M 5 Dep Maldonado 0; Central Espanol 1 Cerro 0.

URUGUAY – OPENING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nacional	8	7	1	0	12	2	22
Wanderers	8	5	2	1	17	8	17
Cerro	8	5	2	1	11	5	17
Penarol	8	5	1	2	16	11	16
Fenix	8	5	0	3	17	15	15
Bella Vista M	8	4	2	2	18	9	14
Danubio	8	4	2	2	17	9	14
Miramar Misiones	8	4	1	3	14	8	13
Defensor	8	4	1	3	14	9	13
Central Espanol	8	3	2	3	7	11	11
Tacuarembo	8	2	3	3	10	9	9
Dep Maldonado	8	2	3	3	9	13	9
River Plate	8	2	2	4	11	14	8
Liverpool	8	2	2	4	9	13	8
Villa Espanola	8	1	3	4	12	18	6
Dep Colonia	8	2	0	6	8	20	6
Plaza	8	0	2	6	3	11	2
Juventud	8	0	1	7	4	24	1

VENEZUELA

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Apr 5: Maracaibo 1 Mineros Guayana 0; Dep Tachira 2 Estudiantes 2.
Apr 6: Ital-Chacao 4 Monagas 3; Trujillanos 3 Caracas 1.
Apr 9: Dep Tachira 1 Ital-Chacao 0; Estudiantes 1 Maracaibo 0; Carabobo 1 Trujillanos 2; Caracas 2 Monagas 0.
Apr 13: Ital-Chacao 4 Caracas 3; Monagas 2 Carabobo 1; Trujillanos 2 Mineros Guayana 1; Maracaibo 0 Dep Tachira 0.
Apr 20: Caracas 2 Carabobo 0; Maracaibo 5 Ital-Chacao 2; Trujillanos 1 Estudiantes 0; Monagas 3 Mineros Guayana 2.

VENEZUELA – CLOSING

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Trujillanos	9	5	3	1	13	10	18
Estudiantes	9	4	4	1	15	9	16
Maracaibo	9	4	4	1	12	6	16
Ital-Chacao	9	3	4	2	16	17	13
Dep Tachira	8	2	5	1	8	7	11
Caracas	9	2	5	2	8	7	11
Monagas	9	3	0	6	12	18	9
Mineros Guayana	9	2	2	5	12	14	8
Carabobo	9	0	3	6	7	15	3
Nacional	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

CENTRAL & NORTH AMERICA

MEXICO

CLOSING CHAMPIONSHIP

Mar 29: Colibries 2 Santos 3; Jaguares 1 Toluca 1; Tigres 2 Pumas UNAM 2; Cruz Azul 0 Monterrey 0; San Luis 1 Necaxa 0; Tecos UAG 1 Veracruz 2.
Mar 30: Guadalajara 2 Atlante 3; Puebla 0 Gallos Blancos 2; Pachuca 0 Morelia 0; America 4 Atlas 4.
Apr 5: Veracruz 4 Tigres 1; Monterrey 3 Tecos UAG 0; Morelia 1 Guadalajara 1; Atlas 1 Jaguares 0.
Apr 6: Pumas UNAM 1 Pachuca 1; Gallos Blancos 1 America 1; Toluca 1 Cruz Azul 3; Atlante 3 San Luis 1; Puebla 0 Colibries 1; Necaxa 0 Santos 1.
Apr 12: Colibries 2 Necaxa 2; Jaguares 0 Gallos Blancos 0; Tecos UAG 3 Toluca 0; Cruz Azul 1 Atlas 1; Tigres 2 Monterrey 1; San Luis 2 Morelia 4.
Apr 13: Guadalajara 1 Pumas UNAM 1; Pachuca 1 Veracruz 1; Santos 1 Atlante 0; America 0 Puebla 1.
Apr 16: Pumas UNAM 2 Tecos UAG 1.
Apr 19: Veracruz 0 Guadalajara 2; Toluca 3 Tigres 1; Morelia 4 Santos 0; Monterrey 3 Pachuca 2; Atlas 2 Tecos UAG 0.
Apr 20: Gallos Blancos 0 Cruz Azul 1; Pumas UNAM 2 San Luis 2; Atlante 4 Necaxa 1; Puebla 3 Jaguares 2; America 2 Colibries 0.

MEXICO – GROUP 1

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atlas	15	6	6	3	24	18	24
America	15	6	5	4	22	16	23
Toluca	15	6	3	6	29	23	21
Colibries	15	5	3	7	21	23	18
Puebla	15	4	2	9	12	23	14

GROUP 2

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Monterrey	15	6	6	3	23	18	24
Tigres	15	7	3	5	21	22	24
Pumas UNAM	15	4	7	4	19	23	19
Pachuca	15	3	8	4	17	19	17
Tecos UAG	15	1	2	12	13	29	5

GROUP 3

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Morelia	15	8	4	3	30	16	28
San Luis	15	5	4	6	21	28	19
Necaxa	15	5	3	7	17	18	18
Cruz Azul	15	3	8	4	17	22	17
Jaguares	15	3	4	8	13	24	13

GROUP 4

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Atlante	15	9	1	5	33	22	28
Guadalajara	15	7	6	2	26	17	27
Santos	15	8	3	4	22	16	27
Veracruz	15	7	3	5	17	16	24
Gallos Blancos	15	3	7	5	12	16	16

LEADING GOALSCORERS
16 Sebastian Gonzalez (Atlante)
15 Jose Cardozo (Toluca)

UNITED STATES

Apr 5: Columbus Crew 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 1 (aet).
Apr 12: MetroStars 0 Columbus Crew 1; Dallas Burn 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 1 (aet); Kansas City Wizards 3 DC United 2 (aet); Colorado Rapids 1 San Jose Earthquakes 2.
Apr 13: Chicago Fire 1 New England Revolution 1 (aet).
Apr 19: MetroStars 1 Los Angeles Galaxy 1 (aet); New England Revolution 1 Columbus Crew 2; DC United 0 Chicago Fire 0 (aet); San Jose Earthquakes 1 Kansas City Wizards 1 (aet).

USA – EASTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Columbus Crew	3	2	1	0	4	2	7
Chicago Fire	2	0	2	0	1	1	2
DC United	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
New England	2	0	1	1	2	3	1
MetroStars	2	0	1	1	1	2	1

USA – WESTERN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kansas City	2	1	1	0	4	3	4
San Jose	2	1	1	0	3	2	4
LA Galaxy	3	0	3	0	3	3	3
Dallas Burn	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
Colorado Rapids	1	0	0	1	1	2	0

LEADING GOALSCORER
2 Carlos Ruiz (Los Angeles Galaxy)

AFRICA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

1st rnd, 1st legs

Apr 11: Esperance (Tun) 5 Rayon Sport (Rwa) 0; USM Alger (Alg) 2 Wallidan (Gam) 0.
Apr 12: Jeanne d'Arc (Sen) 2 ASFA Yenenga (BuF) 0.
Apr 13: AS Aviacao (Ang) 1 SC Villa (Uga) 2; ASEC Abidjan (IvC) 3 AS Niamey (Ngr) 0; Canon Yaounde (Cam) 5 Al Merreikh (Sud) 0; Enyimba (Nig) 3 Satellite (Gui) 0; Ferroviario Maputo (Moz) 2 AS Port Louis 2000 (Mrs) 0; Hassania Agadir (Mor) 0 Al Ittihad (Lby) 0; Hearts of Oak (Gha) 1 AS Douanes (Tog) 0; Highlanders (Zim) 3 St Louisienne (Reu) 1; Ismaili (Egy) 1 Zanaco (Zam) 0; Santos (SAf) 0 Simba SC (Tan) 0; FC St Eloi Lupopo (DRC) 0 US Mbila Nziami (Gab) 1; Stade Malien (Mli) 1 AS Police (Con) 0; Zamalek (Egy) 3 Nzoia Sugar (Ken) 0.

CUP-WINNERS CUP

1st rnd, 1st legs

Apr 12: Africa Sports (IvC) 1 Dyto de Lome (Tog) 1; Costa do Sol (Moz) 1 Jomo Cosmos (SAf) 0; Julius Berger (Nig) 4 Jeunesse Sportive (Gab) 0; Kenya Pipeline (Ken) 2 Anse Reunion (Sey) 1; Maghreb Fes (Mor) 2 Hafia (Gui) 0; Widad Tlemcan (Alg) 2 Al Hilal (Lby) 1.
Apr 13: AS Douanes (Sen) 0 Club Olympique (Mli) 2; Baladeyet Al Mehalla (Egy) 4 Police FC (Uga) 1; Etoile du Congo (Con) 1 Petro Atletico (Ang) 0; Insurance (Eth) 0 Al Hilal (Sud) 2; Mount Cameroon (Cam) 2 Akonangui (EqG) 0; Olympique Moka (Mrs) 1 Power Dynamos (Zam) 3; US Kenya (DRC) 2 APR FC (Rwa) 1; Wydad Casablanca (Mor) 2 ASC Nasr de Sebkha (Mra) 0.

Asante Kotoko (Gha) v Mighty Blue Angels (Lbr) – Angels disqualified for failing to meet player licence submission deadline; Asante Kotoko walkover

Etoile Sahel (Tun) v JS Pobe (Ben) – JS Pobe did not arrive for 1st leg; Etoile Sahel walkover

CAF CUP

1st rnd, 1st legs

Apr 11: Maxaquene (Moz) 1 Black Rhinos (Zim) 1.
Apr 12: Daring Club Motema Pembe (DRC) 4 Renacimiento (EqG) 1; FC 105 Libreville (Gab) 3 Djoliba (Mli) 0; Khartoum (Sud) 1 Kiyovu Sport (Rwa) 1; St Michel United (Sey) 0 Dominan'i Soavina Atsimondrano (Mad) 0.
Apr 13: AS Kaloum (Gui) 0 AS Sonacos (Sen) 0; Coffee FC (Eth) 0 Anassar (Lby) 0; Cotonsport (Cam) 0 Maranatha de Fiokpo (Tog) 0; CS La Mancha (Con) 0 JCA (IvC) 1; Etoile Filante (BuF) 2 Raja Casablanca (Mor) 3; Green Buffaloes (Zam) 2 Express (Uga) 1; Primeiro Agosto (Ang) 2 Mamelodi Sundowns (SAf) 0; Requins Atlantique (Ben) 1 Club Africain (Tun) 0.

Enugu Rangers (Nig) v LISCR (Lbr) – LISCR withdrew; Enugu Rangers walkover

Byes: JS Kabylie (Alg), Al Ahly (Egy)

ASIA

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Semi-finals, 1st legs

April 9

Al Ain (UAE) 4 (Sanogo pen 62, 83, Omar 64, Yaslam 75)
Dalian Shide (Chn) 2 (Hao Haidong 17, Li Yao 88)
HT: 0-1. **Ref:** Al-Delawara (Bhn)
Sent off: An Qi (Dalian) 62min

BEC Tero Sasana (Tha) 3 (Worawoot 41, Khwanchai 69, Therdsak 84)
Pakhtakor (Uzb) 1 (Soliev 80)
HT: 1-0. **Att:** 15,000

Semi-finals, 2nd legs

April 22

Pakhtakor 1 (Djeperov 86)
BEC Tero Sasana 0
HT: 0-0. **Att:** 50,000
Sent off: Preratat (BEC Tero) 89min
BEC Tero 3-2 on agg

Still to be played:
Dalian Shide v Al Ain

JAPAN

FIRST STAGE

Apr 5: Shimizu S-Pulse 4 Cerezo Osaka 5; Yokohama F Marinos 1 Vegalta Sendai 1; Oita Trinita 0 JEF United Ichihara 4; Tokyo Verdy 1969 2 FC Tokyo 1; Gamba Osaka 1 Jubilo Iwata 1; Kashiwa Reysol 1 Kashima Antlers 2.
Apr 6: Urawa Reds 0 Nagoya Grampus Eight 0; Vissel Kobe 0 Kyoto Purple Sanga 2.
Apr 12: Tokyo Verdy 1969 0 Yokohama F Marinos 3; Cerezo Osaka 0 FC Tokyo 0; Oita Trinita 3 Gamba Osaka 0; Jubilo Iwata 1 Urawa Reds 0; JEF United Ichihara 0 Vissel Kobe 3; Kyoto Purple Sanga 0 Kashiwa Reysol 1.
Apr 13: Nagoya Grampus Eight 1 Kashima Antlers 0; Vegalta Sendai 3 Shimizu S-Pulse 1.
Apr 19: Vissel Kobe 1 Vegalta Sendai 2; Urawa Reds 2 Kyoto Purple Sanga 0; Shimizu S-Pulse 0 Jubilo Iwata 2; Gamba Osaka 3 JEF United Ichihara 3; Kashima Antlers 1 Tokyo Verdy 1969 0; FC Tokyo 1 Nagoya Grampus Eight 1.
Apr 20: Kashiwa Reysol 3 Cerezo Osaka 2; Yokohama F Marinos 1 Oita Trinita 0.

JAPAN – 1ST STAGE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Yokohama FM	4	3	1	0	9	3	10
Vegalta Sendai	4	3	1	0	7	3	10
Kashima Antlers	4	3	0	1	6	3	9
JEF United	4	2	1	1	9	7	7
Jubilo Iwata	4	2	1	1	6	5	7
Vissel Kobe	4	2	0	2	5	4	6
Grampus Eight	4	1	3	0	4	3	6
Kashiwa Reysol	4	2	0	2	6	6	6
Gamba Osaka	4	1	2	1	8	8	5
FC Tokyo	4	1	2	1	4	4	5
Cerezo Osaka	4	1	1	2	7	8	4
Urawa Reds	4	1	1	2	3	4	4
Kyoto PS	4	1	0	3	3	5	3
Tokyo Verdy	4	1	0	3	3	7	3
Oita Trinita	4	1	0	3	3	8	3
Shimizu S-Pulse	4	0	1	3	7	12	1

SOUTH KOREA

Mar 23: Daegu 0 Suwon 1; Songnam 1 Daejeon 0; Gwangju 0 Ulsan 1; Bucheon 0 Busan 1; Pohang 3 Anyang 4; Chonbuk 1 Chunnam 1.
Mar 26: Songnam 2 Daegu 0; Gwangju 0 Suwon 0; Bucheon 0 Daejeon 1; Pohang 2 Ulsan 1; Chonbuk 5 Busan 1; Chunnam 0 Anyang 0.
Mar 30: Chunnam 0 Daegu 0; Anyang 1 Chonbuk 0; Busan 2 Pohang 1; Ulsan 2 Bucheon 1; Daejeon 2 Gwangju 0; Suwon 1 Songnam 2.
Apr 2: Daegu 1 Anyang 1; Busan 0 Chunnam 2; Ulsan 1 Chonbuk 2; Daejeon 2 Pohang 1; Suwon 1 Bucheon 0; Songnam 2 Gwangju 1;
Apr 12: Bucheon 2 Songnam 4; Pohang 0 Suwon 0.
Apr 13: Daegu 1 Gwangju 1; Chonbuk 0 Daejeon 0; Chunnam 1 Ulsan 2; Anyang 1 Busan 1.

SOUTH KOREA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Songnam	5	5	0	0	11	4	15
Daejeon	5	3	1	1	5	2	10
Anyang	5	2	3	0	7	5	9
Ulsan	5	3	0	2	7	6	9
Chonbuk	5	2	2	1	8	4	8
Suwon	5	2	2	1	3	2	8
Busan	5	2	1	2	5	9	7
Chunnam	5	1	3	1	4	3	6
Pohang	5	1	1	3	7	9	4
Daegu	5	0	3	2	2	5	3
Gwangju	5	0	2	3	2	6	2
Bucheon	5	0	0	5	3	9	0

OCEANIA

AUSTRALIA

AUSTRALIA: REGULAR SEASON – FINAL

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sydney Olympic	24	16	3	5	51	28	51
Perth Glory	24	16	2	6	48	22	50
Parramatta Power	24	12	4	8	51	27	40
Newcastle Utd	24	10	7	7	37	25	37
Adelaide City	24	11	4	9	40	34	37
Northern Spirit	24	11	3	10	37	44	36
South Melbourne	24	10	5	9	36	37	35
Sydney Utd	24	7	6	11	23	31	27
Melbourne Kn'hts	24	7	6	11	38	52	27
Brisbane Strikers	24	7	5	12	38	45	26
Auckland Kingz	24	6	6	12	26	45	24
Marconi Stallions	24	6	5	13	25	42	23
Wollongong W	24	5	8	11	25	43	23

Top six qualified for championship play-offs

Championship play-offs

Mar 21: Adelaide City 1 Sydney Olympic 0.
Mar 22: Perth Glory 5 Northern Spirit 0.
Mar 23: Newcastle Utd 1 Parramatta Power 2.
Mar 28: Adelaide City 3 Newcastle Utd 2.
Mar 30: Sydney Olympic 1 Northern Spirit 3; Parramatta Power 2 Perth Glory 1.
Apr 4: Newcastle Utd 1 Sydney Olympic 3.
Apr 5: Northern Spirit 1 Parramatta Power 0; Perth Glory 3 Adelaide City 1.
Apr 11: Adelaide City 2 Parramatta Power 2.
Apr 13: Newcastle Utd 0 Northern Spirit 0; Sydney Olympic 1 Perth Glory 2.
Apr 18: Northern Spirit 1 Adelaide City 2.
Apr 19: Perth Glory 4 Newcastle Utd 0.
Apr 20: Paramatta Power 2 Sydney Olympic 2.

AUSTRALIA – CHAMP'SHIP PLAY-OFFS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	
Perth Glory	5	4	0	1	15	4	15	[3]
Adelaide City	5	3	1	1	9	8	10	[0]
Sydney Olympic	5	1	1	3	7	9	10	[6]
Parramatta Power	5	2	2	1	8	7	8	[0]
Northern Spirit	5	2	1	2	5	8	7	[0]
Newcastle Utd	5	0	1	4	4	12	1	[0]

Bonus pts from regular season in brackets

THE SQUAD

THE COACH

Wolfgang 'Felix' MAGATH
Born 26.07.53.
A hard-working midfielder who starred for a decade with Hamburg in the 1980s – he scored their winning goal against Juventus in the 1983 Champions Cup Final. Also won 43 caps with West Germany before turning to a coaching career. After spells at Saarbrucken, Uerdingen, Bremerhaven, Hamburg, Nurnberg, Werder Bremen and Eintracht Frankfurt, he took over at Stuttgart in January 2001 from Rolf Rangnick. Magath then assumed the general manager's responsibilities at the club after Rolf Russmann's departure just before Christmas.

GOALKEEPERS

Diego BENAGLIO (Swi)
08.09.83.
Signed last summer, with an eye to the future, from Grasshopper for a token £65,000.

Thomas ERNST
23.12.67.
Veteran who joined Stuttgart in summer 2000. Previous clubs: Bierbrich, Eintracht Frankfurt, FSV Frankfurt, Bochum.

Veteran status...Ernst

Timo HILDEBRAND
05.04.79.
Present first-choice who joined Stuttgart as a youth player from minor club Holfheim/Ried.

DEFENDERS

Marcelo Jose BORDON (Bra)
07.01.76.
Signed for Stuttgart in 1999 in the original wave of buys from Brazil. Defensive stalwart with more than 100 League appearances.

FERNANDO MEIRA (Por)
05.06.78.
Cost a club record £4.5million from Benfica in the winter break last season and has now settled into central defence after a shaky start. Seven caps for Portugal.

Andreas HINKEL
26.03.82.
Been with Stuttgart for 11 years after being discovered at youth side TSV Leutenbach.

Rui Manuel MARQUES (Ang)
03.09.77.
Made his name with Benfica in Portugal before moving to Switzerland with Baden then Germany with Ulm and Hertha Berlin. Transferred to Stuttgart in 2000. Three caps for Angola.

Thomas SCHNEIDER
24.11.72.
Has appeared more than 150 times for Stuttgart since signing as a 16-year-old from TSV Hofingen.

Timo WENZEL
30.11.77.
Joined Stuttgart at 17 from Burlafingen juniors.

MIDFIELDERS

Benjamin ADRION
31.03.81.
Signed amateur forms in 1993 after switching from Unterhaching.

Krassimir BALAKOV (Bul)
29.03.66.
Came from Sporting Lisbon in 1995. Previously with Etar Tirnovo in his native Bulgaria. Gifted playmaker and free-kick specialist, he once said: "I love football that is attractive and fun to play. Here in Stuttgart I can play football the way I always wanted to." He will retire at the end of the season after more than 220 League appearances and take up a coaching role with the club. 91 caps for Bulgaria.

Bradley CARNELL (SAf)
21.01.77.
Joined Stuttgart in 1998 from South African club Kaizer Chiefs having previously starred at Wits University. Transfer-listed last summer but failed to find a new club. 25 caps for South Africa.

Heiko GERBER
11.07.72.
Formerly with Chemnitz, Arminia Bielefeld and Nurnberg. Born and brought up in Lugau in the former East Germany. Two caps for Germany.

Alexander HLEB (Bls)
01.05.81.
Outstanding young talent whom Stuttgart signed from BATE Borisov in 2000. Is reportedly high on the shopping list of several top Italian clubs. Eight caps for Belarus.

Wanted man...Hleb

Silvio MEISSNER
19.01.73.
Another product of the football establishment of the former German Democratic Republic. Previous clubs: Merseburg, Halle, Chemnitz and Arminia Bielefeld.

Michael MUTZEL
27.09.79.
Signed on a free last summer from Second Division Eintracht Frankfurt. Previously with minor clubs Thannhausen, Memmingen and Augsburg.

Jochen SEITZ
11.10.76.
Previous clubs: Viktoria Aschaffenburg, Hamburg and Unterhaching.

Zvonimir SOLDO (Cro)
02.11.67.
Joined Stuttgart from Dinamo Zagreb after helping Croatia reach the Euro 96 quarter-finals. Also a member of the squad that finished third at France 98. Soldo, a defensive midfielder, has since retired from national team football. 59 caps for Croatia.

Jens TODT
05.01.70.
In his fourth season with Stuttgart after playing under Magath at Werder Bremen. Turned professional with Freiburg, where he was playing when he won his three caps for Germany in 1994-95. One of the squad's most experienced players with 200-plus League appearances for his three senior clubs.

Robert VUJEVIC (Cro)
26.11.80.
Croat youth international who turned professional this season. Signed as a teenager from minor German club Esslingen.

FORWARDS

ADHEMAR (Bra)
24.11.72.
Ex-Brazilian youth international. One of the smallest players in the Bundesliga at 1.69m (5ft 6in), he moved to Stuttgart after a steady if unspectacular career in Brazilian provincial football with Estrela Porto Feliz, Sao Bento, Sao Jose dos Campos, Ponta Grossa and Sao Caetano.

Ioannis AMANATIDIS (Gre)
03.12.81.
Outstanding young talent whom Stuttgart discovered playing locally and recalled last summer from loan to Greuther Furth. Four caps for Greece.

Sean DUNDEE
07.12.72.
Notable as the striker whose international career prospects fell down between both Germany and South Africa, where he was born. Played for Durban, Stuttgart Kickers and Ditzingen before making his Bundesliga breakthrough with Karlsruhe. Played briefly in England with Liverpool after being signed for £2m by Roy Evans, then returned to an injury-marred spell in the Bundesliga with Stuttgart in 1999.

Stephen Kanu FAMEWO (Nig)
30.12.83.
Began with Dynamo Lagos, was brought to Europe by French part-timers Louhans-Cuiseaux, then moved to Germany with Eintracht Frankfurt. In his first season with Stuttgart, who paid Eintracht just £100,000. 10 caps for Nigeria.

Ioan GANEA (Rom)
10.08.73.
Now in his third season with Stuttgart. Previous clubs: ICIM Brasov, FC Brasov, Universitatea Craiova, Gloria Bistrita and Rapid Bucharest. Ganea was Stuttgart's second-highest scorer this season by mid-April with six League goals. 32 caps for Romania.

Steffen HANDSCHUH
26.04.80.
Turned pro with Stuttgart in 1997. Previously with Reichenbach youth side.

Kevin KURANYI
02.03.82.
Made his Germany debut as a substitute in the disappointing 1-1 Euro 2004 qualifying draw with Lithuania in March. Also a German Under-21 international and the brightest of Stuttgart's emerging young talents. Born in Rio de Janeiro and played junior football for Serrano of Petropolis in Brazil before returning to his parents' native land. Recently the subject of a transfer enquiry from Hertha Berlin which was quickly rejected by Stuttgart. However, the likes of Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund have also cast envious eyes on him. Stuttgart's 13-goal top scorer in the League this season to mid-April and was their five-goal leading scorer in European competition.

Top scorer...Kuranyi

Christian TIFFERT
18.02.82.
Began with home-town side Halle, based in the former East Germany, moving on to Second Division Tennis Borussia Berlin. Signed from there by Stuttgart three years ago.

STUTTGART

All together...Stuttgart's League form and UEFA Cup run have revived memories of past glory

Stuttgart were pleasurably surprised to have gone so far. It was more than most other German clubs could boast in Europe this term.

In coach Magath, Stuttgart have the ideal man to make their economic policy work on the pitch. That said, Magath is a busy man: he took on added managerial responsibilities during the winter break after general manager Rolf Russmann was sacked on the eve of the club's Christmas party.

Perhaps it is too much to expect that Stuttgart, in the next year, will make a quantum leap into title contenders. But one of German football's oldest clubs – founded on September 9, 1893 – have had their share of success with four League titles and three domestic Cups.

There is no reason why they should not regain that pre-eminence, which they also briefly enjoyed in Europe when they were UEFA Cup runners-up to Diego Maradona's Napoli in 1989 and Cup-winners Cup runners-up to Chelsea in 1998.

Missing out on Europe

Ironically, Stuttgart hit the heights of German football just a year too early to qualify to play in the European Cup, which was launched in 1955-56. Similarly, their 1958 German Cup victory came a year too soon to earn a place among the founding competitors of the Cup-winners Cup.

In the early years of organised German football it was neighbours Stuttgarter Kickers who were top dogs.

The German championship was organised on a regional basis, with the various winners meeting in an end-of-season play-off series. Stuttgart reached the Final only once, losing 6-4 to all-conquering Schalke in Cologne in 1935. Their hero that day in one of the most spectacular matches in domestic soccer history was inside-forward Otto Bockle.

After the war it took immense efforts to relaunch German football. The regional championships were revived in 1947-48 and in 1950 Stuttgart emerged on top of this uncertain new world. Victory by 2-1 over Offenbach Kickers in front of 80,000 in Berlin's Olympic stadium was the first of a run of four major honours in eight years.

Fans then had to wait until 1984 and a surprise League title under Helmut Benthaus. Top internationals such as the Forster brothers (Bernd and Karlheinz) plus Guido Buchwald provided the security in defence, Iceland's Asgeir Sigurvinsson the guile in midfield, winger Karl Allgower and Sweden's Dan Corneliusson pace in attack.

Stuttgart's signing of aggressive striker Jurgen Klinsmann from neighbouring Kickers brought the extra attacking fire that took them to the 1989 UEFA Cup Final. Napoli were runaway favourites but were very nearly upset. Stuttgart lost 'only' 2-1 in Italy but then, despite a goal from Klinsmann, were held 3-3 in front of their own fans.

Klinsmann left in due course for Internazionale but Stuttgart regrouped for another surprise German title win in 1992 under the controversial Christoph Daum. In the Champions Cup first round he made the notorious blunder of sending out one foreigner too many as a substitute against Leeds United at Elland Road. UEFA ordered a replay which Stuttgart then lost in Barcelona. Although the club regained the German Cup in 1997 and went on to the following season's Cup-winners Cup Final, they took a long time to get over both the embarrassment and financial consequences.

Daum, of course, paid the usual price before going on to even greater controversy at Bayer Leverkusen with his drugs scandal. Magath is picking up the pieces – and highly effectively, too.

Magath: 'I'm no miracle worker'

Hard graft...Magath

WORLD SOCCER: When you took over at Stuttgart two years ago relegation was a threat. Now the fans call you a miracle worker. Is that how you see yourself?

FELIX MAGATH: Certainly not. The only secret at Stuttgart is an open one and it's called hard work. We also decided that we would put our faith in players from our own youth ranks. It's gratifying that it's worked so well so fast because it's never guaranteed. But it's not the first time, as coach, that I've given young players a chance and I'm sure it won't be the last. My ambition this season has been to go on building a reputation for good football so the 'sold out' signs go up before every match.

Since Rolf Russmann left, you have been both general manager and team manager. Has it changed your routine?

No, I work on the principle that the early bird catches the worm, so I've always made an early start each day. The main difference now is that in addition to running the team I am also responsible for contract recommendations and the like. I used to let Herr Russmann sort out transfers and contracts. I never got involved. Now I'm the one who talks to the board.

Does it help that you filled that particular role at Hamburg, Uerdingen and Saarbrucken?

Perhaps. But the extra responsibility is not that much of a problem. As coach, no one knows better the strengths and weaknesses of our players and whether we have the resources to improve the team here or have to buy them in. The difference is that if I want to go into the transfer market then it's down to me to make the first enquiries of players and their agents.

Why didn't you take dual responsibility from the start?

Because there was no vacancy! In any case, I thought it would have been doubling the job risk. At least I don't have to negotiate directly with the players about money, and I'm grateful. That would make the job tough. People say I am more like a British club manager, and that's true. Why do we sack more coaches than British clubs? Because the coach is always in danger of clashing with the manager since their roles are so entwined.

If Stuttgart have a bad run, must you sack yourself?

No. That would be for the directors to decide. In the same way, when I took extra responsibility they asked me how much money I wanted. I said I wasn't interested. I took it on for the club, not the money.

How good are Kevin Kuranyi and Ioannis Amanatidis?

Kuranyi has a lot of potential and Amanatidis is also a great talent in the making. Perhaps they are not looking as sharp as early on but it's difficult to get the balance right. Kuranyi still has a lot to learn even though he's now on the fringe of the national team. Really, though, he doesn't need all that stuff yet. He's only 21. I've talked to [Germany coach] Rudi Voller about him but I haven't tried to influence him. Rudi's a big boy, he can pick his own team.

It's reported Hertha Berlin have bid for Kuranyi.

They have expressed an interest but they shouldn't waste their time worrying about players who have contracts through to 2005. We are under no financial pressure to sell anyone.

Keir Radnedge

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Send your entry by May 20 to:

WorldSoccerFordCompetition@ipcmedia.com

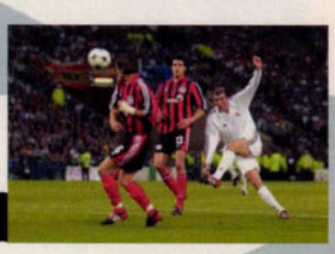
BY PHONE
0906 700 6046
(calls charged at 50p per minute, lines open until May 20)

1998

1999

2000

2001


2002

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DestinationFootball

Demolition derbi

Sid Lowe reports on another action-packed 'match of the century' between Real Madrid and Barcelona

WITH Real Madrid sitting some 24 points ahead of Barcelona, the capital's press was gleefully predicting a historic *derbi* victory. Barça, they giggled, were on the verge of a Real thrashing. They should have known better: Spain's twice-yearly 'match of the century' went Barça's way and they could have taken home more than the 1-1 draw at the Bernabeu.

It was an unusually quiet derby – before the game, at least. The mutual antagonism, stirring and point-scoring that normally characterises the week leading up to the match was conspicuous by its absence – not least because of the lurking presence of huge Champions League quarter-final second legs for both clubs. The subdued feeling couldn't last, of course, and the match itself turned out to be classic derby fare, brimming with tension and confrontation.

Perhaps inevitably, the star man was Barcelona captain Luis Enrique, back from injury, who demonstrated why his team-mates had so sorely missed his leadership and his delight and expertise in getting under his opponents' skin.

Nowhere is that more apparent than at the Bernabeu, Luis Enrique's previous home and the scene of a torrid final season as Madrid player.

While Luis Figo was shocked at his Camp Nou reception after his move to Real, Luis Enrique revels in such animosity. The abuse spurs him on, and that rubs off on his team-mates. His feisty, motivational presence against Madrid made a huge difference, as coach Raddy Antic admitted: "Luis Enrique is much more than a footballer; he's a leader and a character. It was great to have him fit at last – Luis grows in adversity."

Despite Ronaldo opening the scoring after 15 minutes, Barcelona, employing an aggressive, high-tempo approach, were on top. They snapped into tackles, created chances and would not allow Madrid to settle. Claude Makelele and Flavio Conceicao were unable to bring the ball out from deep midfield, Zinedine Zidane was consistently closed down by the tenacious Thiago Motta, and Raul hardly got a touch.

Yet, without the suspended Javier Saviola, Barcelona lacked a natural striker, and it was left to Luis Enrique to grab the equaliser. This he celebrated with another display of in-your-face Barça pride, right in front of Madrid's fans.

They might not have risen to the bait – there was no flying pig – but their players certainly did. An increasingly frustrated Zidane lashed out at Carles Puyol with an elbow, prompting a mass brawl in which Zidane appeared to try to gouge out Luis Enrique's eyes, Gabri threw punches and Makelele pulled Motta's hair while everybody else pushed and shoved and snarled.

"I deserved a red card," Makelele admitted, but referee Muniz Fernandez booked nobody, despite producing 11 cards at other times during the match, including two for the rather unlucky Michel Salgado.

Both sides were unimpressed with Muniz's performance. Madrid's players moaned about his inability to prevent Barça's aggressive approach – although they committed twice as many fouls – and Michel Salgado claimed that Muniz was too easily "influenced" by the pressure exerted by Luis Enrique upon every decision.

They were unhappier still in Catalonia. Their complaints centered on Muniz's failure to send off Zidane, the lack of a yellow card for an outrageous Roberto Carlos dive and, above all, his decisions to rule out Gaizka Mendieta's first-half 'goal' for offside (probably correct) and not to give a penalty for a clear Fernando Hierro foul on Luis Enrique.

Catalan daily *Sport* described the result as a "moral victory" – one the club desperately needed after a draw-strewn 12-match run that had taken them back towards the drop zone.

That run merely exacerbated fears and arguments over the club's future, with a series of candidates – one of whom laughingly promised to allow women into the dressing-room on match days – jostling into position for presidential elections that hadn't even been announced, despite calls from press, ex-players and supporters.

President Enric Reyna's inertia led to suspicions about his intentions. He

Derby tussle...Zidane and Motta clash at the Bernabeu

had taken over from Joan Gaspart as a temporary, pacifying stop-gap but the more he skirted the issue, the more he looked like a man desperate to hang on to power. Until, on the Friday before the *derbi*, he finally announced an EGM for May 1 at which elections would be set; elections for which he insisted he wouldn't stand "if the *socis* [members] do not want me to". And, with Barcelona painfully crashing out of the Champions League against Juventus four days later and having nothing but survival to play for back home, few will be calling for Reyna to remain in the post.

Whoever the new president is, his task will be enormous. Something needs to be done to prevent Madrid disappearing out of sight. After all, as Jorge Valdano said after the derby: "When we wake up tomorrow, we'll still be 24 points ahead."

But if Barça currently show no signs of closing in on Madrid, the same can't be said of Deportivo La Coruna and Real Sociedad. Madrid's victory over Depor last month looked to have opened a decisive gap at the top, but things have taken an interesting turn – particularly up in San Sebastian, where Real Sociedad brought post-Manchester United 'Galactic' Real Madrid crashing to earth with a virtuoso, 4-2 thrashing.

Raynald Denoueix's side have recaptured their early-season form and against Madrid were perfect in both conception and application. They were pacy, slick and relentless, applying an asphyxiating pressure that Madrid couldn't live with. Interviewed after the game, visiting keeper Iker Casillas could only say: "Chapeau, Real Sociedad!"

That victory threw open the title race, especially with Depor and Sociedad taking advantage of the derby draw the following week to close to within a point of Madrid with eight matches remaining. Depor defeated Sevilla 3-1 and Real Sociedad hit five past Rayo Vallecano, led by their third manager of the season, Antonio Iriondo.

And if that didn't make Madrid nervous enough, they suffered the worst possible blow to their Liga and Champions League chances: talisman Raul was rushed to hospital with appendicitis and will be out for nearly a month.

Egyptian heart-throb with a new fan club in Galicia

MENTION his name on any Arab street corner and it will be greeted by the same sort of awed recognition usually only accorded to superstars such as Ronaldo or David Beckham. But to the Arab world, and Egypt in particular, Ahmed 'Mido' Hossam embodies their dreams that one day a player from this football-mad part of the world will be capable of joining the sport's aristocratic elite.

The big question is, of course, will the Cairo-born striker, who made his international debut at just 17, possess not just the ability but also the strength of character to fulfil the hopes and expectations of his millions of fans back home.

Recent events do not inspire complete confidence. Although he only recently turned 20, the long-haired, Ferrari-driving striker is already trying to shake off a reputation for being difficult to handle and is now looking to rebuild his career at Spanish club Celta Vigo after falling foul of Ajax.

The good news is that within a month of his arrival, the Celta faithful believe that after years of knocking on the door of European football's elite they have at last found a striker capable of firing them into the Champions League.

Mido began his career at Cairo club Zamalek, where his early success encouraged him to make the move to Europe to join Belgian side Gent and then on to Ajax. It was at the Dutch club he really began to make his name. Last season he grabbed a crucial 10 goals in the last nine games to help Ajax clinch the championship and then went on to notch another in the Cup Final against Utrecht.

But things started to go wrong at the start of this season. Pulled off after 32 minutes of a League match against Groningen in September, Mido lost his temper and told reporters that he wanted to leave the club. Coach Ronald Koeman, schooled in the collective principles of the club, was quick to condemn Mido's individualistic outburst.

"If someone thinks they are more important than Ajax, then they don't belong here," he said. "He's only 19 and still has everything to prove. In the whole of Europe there are players on the bench, much better that Mido and they don't complain."

A swift apology smoothed things over, but it turned out to be a temporary truce. Although Mido proceeded to score 18 goals in 36 games, Koeman

accused him of "not giving 100 per cent" in training and of having the "wrong attitude". After the Egyptian insisted he would not change, he was banished to the reserves for the rest of the season.

But despite the fact that the Europe-wide transfer window had closed, Mido was able to avoid the humiliation of reserve team exile because Celta obtained FIFA agreement to a loan deal to cover the gap left in their squad by a serious knee injury to Argentinian defender Sebastian Mendez.

Mido could hardly have made a better start in Vigo. A classy strike on his debut helped Celta to a 2-1 win over Athletic Bilbao, and three games later a spectacular double sealed a 2-0 win over Osasuna that allowed the Galicians to displace Valencia from the final Champions League berth.

"I am really happy here," says Mido. "Koeman said I was not a good lad, but I think you will see that that just isn't true."

Simon Baskett

Fact file

Club Celta Vigo (Spa)
Country Egypt
Born February 23, 1983, in Cairo
Previous clubs Zamalek, Gent (Blg), Ajax (Hol)
International debut January 2001, v United Arab Emirates
Honours Dutch League 2002; Dutch Cup 2002

Three is a magic number

Never mind the accusations of defensiveness – Italian clubs are back in Champions League business. Paddy Agnew reports

Toast of San Siro...Jon Dahl Tomasson celebrates his last-gasp goal against Ajax that put Milan into the Champions League semi-finals

'CUPERITIS', *catenaccio* and the Champions League – these were the dominant themes of a spring marked by an Italian renaissance beyond anyone's wildest dreams. Given the successive whitewashes of recent seasons in European competition, Italian football would have happily settled for even one side in the semi-finals of the Champions League. To wake up on the morning of April 24 and find that three teams – Juventus, Internazionale and Milan – had all made it to the last four, in the process guaranteeing an Italian finalist at Old Trafford on May 28, was simply too good to believe.

Rome-based sports daily *Corriere dello Sport* caught the mood accurately when exclaiming in a front-page leader: "Three of our teams and Real Madrid in the semi-finals, that is as good as it gets. That Italian football was on the way back was clear enough from the beginning of the season. That it would touch these levels only seemed a dream."

Not for the first time, Italian success did not meet with universal approval. After the first legs of the quarter-final ties that pitted Juventus against Barcelona and Inter against Valencia, much of the Spanish media was outspokenly critical of "old-fashioned" Italian *catenaccio*. One inspired commentator likened the Italians' negative attitude to "pigs rolling in shit".

Those same commentators were even less impressed after the second legs, when Juventus scored an extra-time winner on the counter-attack against Barcelona, and Inter rode out an attacking storm in Valencia to hold on, against all the odds. "Death, Italian Style – Bloodsucker Juventus Strikes As On Other Nights," Spanish sports daily *Marca* headlined its report on the Barça-Juve tie. "Heresy at the Mestalla," echoed *El Pais* of the Valencia-Inter game.

At this point, a certain amount of wheat had best be separated from the chaff of disappointed Spanish critics. Yes, it is true Italian football remains a basically defensive game. No, not all Italian teams suffer from chronic 'Cuperitis', a particularly virulent Italo-Argentine strain of the *catenaccio* virus.

For the time being, only one Italian team merits such critical disapproval, namely Inter. For the time being, only Inter have gone down with a bad dose of 'Cuperitis', picked up, of course, from their talented but all-too-cautious Argentinian coach Hector Cuper.

If Spanish critics thought it was bad watching Inter chasing shadows, missing tackles and relying on the excellence of inspired goalkeeper Francesco Toldo against Valencia, they should take comfort from the consideration that 'Cuperitis' can have an even more negative impact on a big game.

Take the second Milan derby of the season, on April 12. With five minutes of normal time to play and with his side losing 1-0, Cuper opted to make his third substitution of the evening. What dramatic card would he throw on the table? He had Argentinian striker Hernan Crespo and Portuguese winger Sergio Conceicao on the bench. Surely one of these would come on?

No way, not with our Hector. Up went the numbers board to reveal a masterly late move – young defender Giovanni Pasquale being replaced by, guess who, Paraguayan defender Carlos Gamarra. Not surprisingly, given the audacity of that change, an unruffled Milan held on comfortably for a 1-0 win.

Cuper's caution, allied to a habit of getting his initial line-up wrong in at least one key position, meant that it was an Inter full of self-doubt that took a 1-0 lead into the second leg of the Valencia tie. Even an early goal from Christian Vieri, who made the most of an error by Roberto Ayala, did nothing to halt the Inter collapse.

It has been suggested Inter are a team whose corporate identity falls far short of the sum of their individual talents. Never was this more obvious than at Mestalla, where players simply did not work for each other and where final match statistics made for revealing reading – shots on goal: Valencia 27, Inter 3; corners: Valencia 11, Inter 2; possession: Valencia 71 per cent, Inter 29 per cent.

Not for nothing did Toldo and midfielder Gigi Di Biagio come to blows just before half-time. Not for nothing, either, was Toldo man of the match, a series of prodigious saves defying both gravity and the natural laws of football.

Where Inter go from here is difficult to predict, especially since wonder striker Vieri may be out for the rest of the season following a thigh injury picked up in the second leg. Logic would suggest Milan, narrow winners over Ajax in the third Champions League quarter-final with Italian involvement, will beat them in their derby semi-final clash. Logic would also suggest Inter have already lost their Serie A title battle with Juve.

All of which could mean that, notwithstanding protracted runs in both the Champions League and the Serie A race, Cuper could be out of a job at the end of the season. This would be harsh justice given the misery of Inter's pre-Cuper seasons. Despite everything, the coach deserves a third season with Inter, if only because he has gifted two new items of terminology to the hungry pack of football hacks – namely, 'Cuperitis' and, re the Champions League, 'decline and qualification'.

As for Juventus and Milan, their immediate future appears a great deal less pessimistic. They may even be destined to meet in the Champions League Final. Certainly, before long Juventus seem certain to wrap up their 27th Italian League title.

Both sides have played true to form through this busy spring. Juventus have been tough and aggressive in grinding out winning results, week by week. Milan have been distracted, inconsistent and occasionally brilliant on their way to the Champions League semi-finals.

With the exception of the flu-ridden Champions League second phase defeats by Manchester United, Juventus have been a model of self-confidence. They may not be a great side but will give semi-final opponents Real Madrid and all their Serie A rivals a rare run for their money.

Milan, by contrast, are a team capable of raising their game to surprising heights on big Champions League nights and equally capable of touching remarkable lows on small Serie A afternoons. A 1-0 home loss to Empoli before that remarkable 3-2 quarter-final second leg win against Ajax at the San Siro makes the point.

Against Empoli, Milan simply did not care, even if that defeat *de facto* ruled them out of the title contest. Against Ajax, men like Filippo Inzaghi,

Negative vibes...Hector Cuper

Andrii Shevchenko, Paolo Maldini and Alessandro Nesta lifted their game to Olympian heights as they three times changed up a gear, twice recovering from Ajax equalisers to score the winner through substitute Jon Dahl Tomasson in added time.

If Milan do make the Final, they are guaranteed to lay on a show. The best part of the Italian renaissance, 'Cuperitis' notwithstanding, could be yet to come.

Pro-file Adrian Mutu

Romanian youngster backing flair with consistency at Parma

PARMA'S Romanian forward Adrian Mutu has gone a long way to answering his critics this season. While no one watching him perform in the previous two seasons for Verona would question his imagination, elegance and finishing – 12 League goals last term – the word was that he was too inconsistent.

But since moving to Parma last summer in an £8 million deal, a new and improved Mutu has emerged, with liberal lashings of application having been added to his game.

From day one at Parma, it was apparent Mutu meant business. On his debut against Udinese (1-1), a breathtaking display on the left flank made him man of the match, and another 90 minutes of sheer class followed in a 2-2 draw at Juventus. He has stayed in high gear, too, scoring 13 goals, doing his share of creative work and dovetailing nicely with Brazilian strike-partner Adriano.

Mutu's desire to make the most of his opportunity can be easily understood. After all, he had resigned himself to start the season in Serie B with relegated Verona. Financially, the club were in deep water and had no choice but to try to sell him. Yet apart from Everton, whose £6.5m bid was deemed unacceptable, takers were few and far between. Just five days before the Serie A kick-off, the ice was broken when Juventus recruited Parma striker Marco Di Vaio. Parma needed a new forward and promptly brought in Mutu.

"Parma is a good step up for my career," says Mutu. "I've been in Italy for over three years now and am completely used to the football and lifestyle. We have a very young team here with lots of ambition and potential. Our aim is to be able to match the best in Italy in two or three years, and I want to be part of it."

However, there are doubts about whether Mutu will be there for the long haul. Rumours abound that Juventus are preparing a bid, and what Juve want, they usually get. If it happens, it will give Mutu another chance to prove he can cut it at the very highest level. After being bought by Internazionale from Dinamo Bucharest early in 2001, Mutu's agent, Giovanni Becali, described him as a future European Footballer of the Year. But Inter coach Marcello Lippi picked the youngster only a handful of times before loaning him to Verona, a move that became permanent.

And who will be Mutu's boss should he go to Juve? Why, Lippi, who, with the passing years, has come to appreciate what the Romanian has to offer.

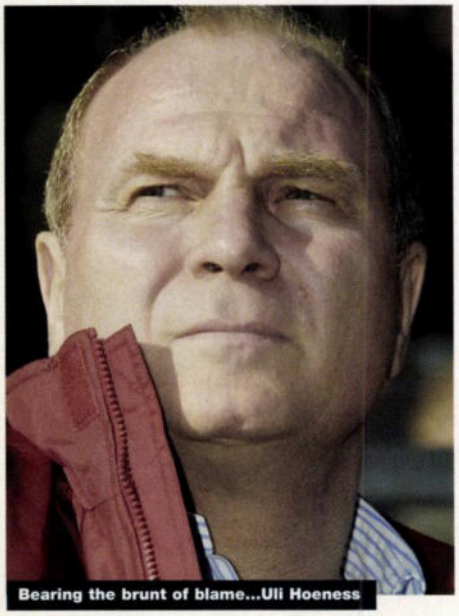
Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Parma (Ita)
Country Romania
Born January 8, 1979, in Calinesti
Previous clubs Arges Pitesti, Dinamo Bucharest, Internazionale (Ita), Verona (Ita)
International debut March 2000, v Greece
International caps 26 (3 goals)

Bayern stand alone

The League, backed by all 35 other pro clubs, has censured the Bavarians over the Kirch TV cash affair. Nick Bidwell reports


Bearing the brunt of blame...Uli Hoeness

THE combatants called a truce, entered into peace negotiations and reached a settlement. Then hostilities broke out again. The German League (DFL) and Bayern Munich remain at daggers drawn over the Kirch TV cash affair.

Bayern, who have been moving remorselessly towards another Bundesliga title, were always set on a collision course with the DFL once it was revealed in February that the Bavarians had received a secret top-up payment of £14.3million from the troubled KirchMedia group.

With Bayern seemingly in flagrant breach of the League's collective marketing agreement, whereby all German professional clubs share the money generated by television rights, the DFL had no option but to investigate. Under pressure from all the other clubs to hold Bayern to account, the DFL simply could not look the other way. Either the League dealt with the matter or lost all credibility, especially at a time when Kaiserslautern had been docked three points from next season's total for financial irregularities.

Bayern, though, were mounting a furious defence. They claimed their contract with Kirch – which ended last year when the group went into administration with huge losses – had infringed neither DFL regulations nor the idea of professional club solidarity. They insisted they would not accept a fine or points deduction. President Franz Beckenbauer even warned they might quit the Bundesliga in favour of Serie A, an idle threat if ever there was one.

The acrimony continued. Bayern general manager Uli Hoeness claimed the DFL was waging an "economic war" on his club and intimated the League had leaked details of the smoking gun to the media. DFL chiefs angrily demanded a retraction.

Finally, six weeks into the saga, Bayern and the League appeared to be burying the hatchet. By way of compromise, Bayern agreed to pay back £2m to the League and give a further £330,000 to a charity for young victims of the Iraq war; the DFL announced it would take no further action. But the pipes of peace were not to be smoked. A subsequent DFL communique describing Bayern's behaviour in the matter as "morally reprehensible" and singling out Hoeness for scathing criticism re-ignited Bavarian fury. The club promptly withdrew its representatives from all DFL committees.

"This press release was like a declaration of war," stormed Bayern vice-president Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, who also pulled out of the national team task force on which he has sat since 2001. "It's a form of defamation which has poisoned the atmosphere. We no longer see any basis for further co-operation with the DFL. To accuse Uli Hoeness of acting immorally in his part in TV negotiations is to twist the facts. Uli was responsible for negotiating a sum unique in the history of the Bundesliga.

"It's time we had a good look at the DFL. I don't know anyone in the First or Second Division who is entirely satisfied with them. Their organisation has failed to deliver in terms of marketing. We are still a long way behind the English Premiership. All the DFL has produced for the Bundesliga is a new logo."

While DFL president Werner Hackmann conceded the tone of the controversial media release was "unfortunate", he declared he could not understand Bayern's reaction, adding that most people would consider their willingness to pay back some of the money as an "admission of guilt".

Clearly, the great divide between Bayern and the rest of German football will not be easily bridged in the foreseeable future. At the subsequent DFL general assembly, boycotted by Bayern, all 35 other professional clubs backed the League's stance.

"It is Bayern who need the DFL, not the other way round," said Bochum president Werner Altegoer. "It doesn't worry us if they threaten to pull out."

These are sorry times for German football, hardly helped by Germany's depressing performance in the 1-1 draw with Lithuania in a Euro 2004 qualifier in Nurnberg. Ahead after only eight minutes thanks to a back-heeled goal from Carsten Ramelow, the national team were sub-standard in virtually all areas. It was only justice when Lithuanian midfielder Tomas Razanauskas scored a late equaliser.

Germany had a legitimate goal ruled out in the second half; contrary to the opinion of the linesman, the ball had not gone out of play before Fredi Bobic crossed for Bernd Schneider to slot home. Yet as coach Rudi Voller pointed out, his team ultimately did not deserve to win.

Voller certainly has a lot of problems to address: the disappointing strike partnership of Bobic and Miroslav Klose, the angst-ridden play of his back line, the lack of creativity and width, and yet another under-par performance from left-sided Schalke midfielder Jorg Bohme.

"We are too careless and playing too much within ourselves," said Voller. "We must give all we have every game. This result must be a warning before our game in Scotland in June."

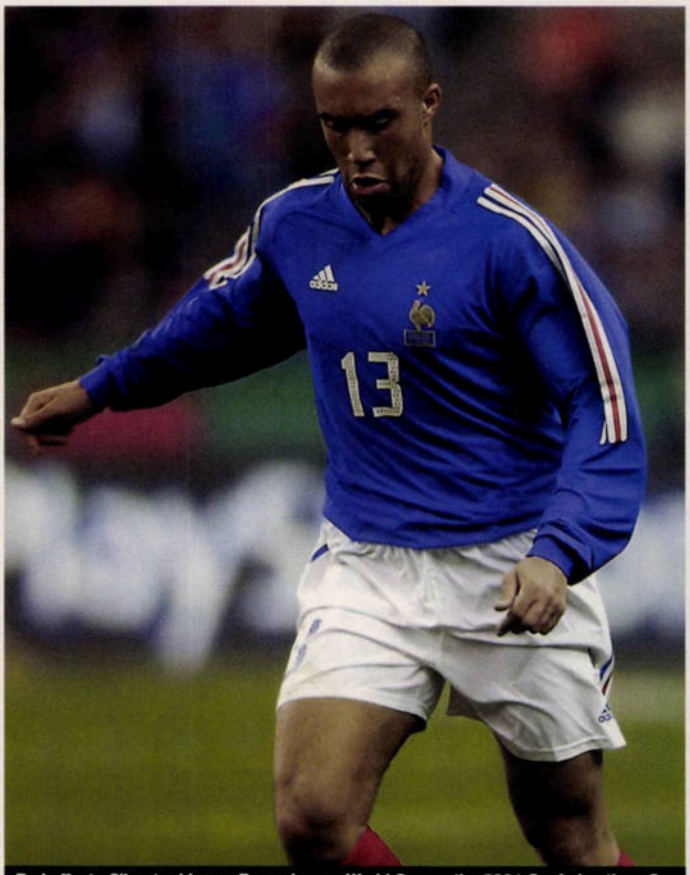
Back in the Bundesliga, Schalke's Frank Neubarth became the sixth coach to lose his job this season. Neubarth, appointed last summer, had done well in his first stint in charge of a Bundesliga club, keeping an injury-hit side in the top six. But he was ultimately undone by five games without a win in February and March, and festering relations with senior players such as keeper Frank Rost, Bohme, playmaker Andy Moller and Belgian midfielder Marc Wilmots.

The latter was constantly overlooked by Neubarth despite being a long-time Schalke favourite. Ironically, it was to Wilmots that Schalke passed the coaching baton, though the former Belgium skipper insists he will stay at the helm only until the end of the season, having decided to return home to begin a career in politics.

Flattering to deceive...Germany pile on the pressure in their disappointing 1-1 draw with Lithuania

Criticism grows over Confederations Cup

There are few supporters of the summer tournament, says Andre Duclos



Bad effect...Silvestre blames France's poor World Cup on the 2001 Confederations Cup

LIKE IT or lump it, the much-reviled Confederations Cup is to go ahead in France in June. One of its strongest critics has been international defender Mickael Silvestre of Manchester United, who declared, somewhat surprisingly, that France's poor showing in the 2002 World Cup was down to the fact that the previous year they had played in the Confederations Cup in the Far East.

It could, on the other hand, be argued that one of the main objects of that exercise was to accustom the national team to playing in those regions, though if so, it hardly seemed to have done much good.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger has begged the federation not to choose all his French stars for this year's competition, and so far seems to have had a sympathetic hearing.

Meanwhile, federation director general Gerald Enault has put forth a convoluted justification for this surely superfluous tournament, insisting that in agreeing to stage it, France have done everyone a favour since the many Europe-based players due to take part now don't have to traipse across the globe to take part.

Yet, Brazil and France apart, it doesn't look a very impressive field. New Zealand rather than the resilient Australia are in it, so are the USA, Colombia, Japan and Cameroon. Turkey have been included although without any obvious claim to be there.

Still, the tournament may afford a chance to Anthony Reveillere, a rising young right-back who has done so well for Valencia this season on loan from Rennes. The 23-year-old is already coveted by a posse of clubs, Manchester United and Real Madrid reportedly among them.

Pro-file Benoit Pedretti

Sochaux midfielder in the fast lane to international stardom

SOCHAUX, a club backed by car manufacturers Peugeot, have a sleek top-of-the-range model in young French international midfielder Benoit Pedretti.

Indeed, the 22-year-old, a product of the Sochaux youth set-up, has been so impressive in a defensive midfield role for the club and national Under-21s that he was given his first senior cap as a substitute in a friendly against Yugoslavia in November. His full debut came in the 6-0 Euro 2004 win over Malta in March.

True, Patrick Vieira and Claude Makelele remain France's first-choice pairing in the midfield engine-room. But Pedretti has already seemingly taken over from Emmanuel Petit and Olivier Dacourt as first reserve.

"I don't pick players solely to please them, and through his displays in training and in matches, Pedretti has justified my choice," said France coach Jacques Santini. "If he's in the squad, it's because he deserves it. He has a lot of influence at Sochaux, helping them out of the Second Division and making them a good top-flight team."

Don't let Pedretti's boyish demeanour and frail physique fool you – he can tackle with the best. He also reads the game well, boasts a good turn of pace, is a relentlessly accurate passer and moves forward with purpose, too. He recognises his failings, though. "I need to score more goals. It's my biggest fault," he says, reflecting on just two League goals since making his Sochaux debut in 2000. "I also need to work on my heading, left foot and the way I react to changing circumstances in each game. Now that I'm in the France squad, I can no longer take anyone by surprise. I've still a lot to learn at the highest level."

Maturity is obviously a trait of Pedretti, an observation confirmed by ex-Sochaux boss Jean Fernandez. "Even at a young age, Benoit was always very professional," he asserts. "He didn't go out, he didn't party. He was the first to arrive for training and last to leave. What I like about him is that despite his role as a defensive midfielder, he has an attacking spirit. He always keeps his head up. That's why his vision is so good. He reminds me a lot of Didier Deschamps early in his career."

Pedretti is almost certain to be lured abroad at some point, revealing that England is the most attractive destination for him. However, he is in no hurry to migrate. "I think I have some challenges left in French football. I don't want to leave my country prematurely and run the risk of failing. I'm not even sure there's room for me at big French clubs like Lyon and Monaco. I may stay at Sochaux for another year, especially if we qualify for Europe."

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Sochaux
Country France
Born November 12, 1980, in Audincourt
Previous club Audincourt
International debut November 2002, v Yugoslavia
International caps 3 (0 goals)
Honours French Second Division 2001

Saints and winners

Strachan, Beattie and co march on Cardiff. Gavin Hamilton reports.

IRRESPECTIVE of the result of the FA Cup Final in Cardiff on May 17, Southampton, who play holders Arsenal, will be remembered as one of the teams of the 2002-03 season.

The Saints' 2-1 defeat of Watford may have been overshadowed by events in the other FA Cup semi-final, where Arsenal's winning goal proved highly controversial. But their achievement in reaching their first Final since 1977 deserves recognition.

A number of factors have helped to underpin Southampton's success. Since taking over from Stuart Gray in October 2001, former Coventry manager Gordon Strachan has moulded a dynamic, hard-working team which plays to the strengths of striker James Beattie, the former Blackburn reject who is vying with Thierry Henry for the title of Premier League top scorer. At the back, Finland's Antti Niemi is fast developing a reputation as one of the League's best goalkeepers.

Off the pitch, events have also taken a turn for the better. Southampton's new stadium, St Mary's, may lack the intimidating atmosphere of the old Dell, but its greater capacity has given the club new financial powers.

Arsenal will be without Sol Campbell (suspension) and possibly Patrick Vieira (injury) for the Final. Vieira twisted his knee in the 1-0 win against Sheffield United, a game in which Arsenal did just enough to progress. However, they had cause to thank David Seaman for a wonderful save late in the game, and referee Graham Poll, who allowed Freddie Ljungberg's goal to stand despite him seeming to bodycheck a Sheffield player during the build-up, as well as the official ignoring the claims of another who lay injured and requiring attention.

Three days later, Arsenal had to settle for a point after being held to a 2-2 draw at home by Manchester United in a match billed as the title decider.

A consecutive League and FA Cup double is still possible for Arsenal, but Alex Ferguson was the happier manager after the Highbury draw. The result left United three points clear of Arsenal, but having played one more game and with a slightly inferior goal difference. In other words, there was all to play for.

Moment of truth...referee Poll ignores Sheffield United protests as Arsenal celebrate Ljungberg's winner

The form book favoured United after they put 10 goals past Liverpool and Newcastle. The 6-2 victory at St James' Park ended any hopes Bobby Robson's side might have had of challenging the supremacy of the top two, for this season at least.

At the other end of the table, Leeds were in danger of being drawn into the relegation zone after Birmingham and Bolton pulled off important victories to pull clear of West Ham. The Hammers' manager, Glenn Roeder, was taken to hospital suffering from chest pains, later diagnosed as a stroke, following a 1-0 win over Middlesbrough.

The resignation of Peter Ridsdale, first as Leeds chairman, then as a director, was inevitable. But the club remain deep in debt despite the sale of many key players. The consequences of relegation do not bear thinking about, although a 2-0 win over Fulham, another club still not clear from relegation, was a major boost. A week earlier, Fulham had sacked manager Jean Tigana – due to step down in the summer in any case – replacing him with former club captain Chris Coleman.

Two clubs already contemplating the reality of the drop are Sunderland and West Brom. Sunderland were relegated after a 3-0 defeat by Birmingham City, their 22nd of the season, and now face possible financial meltdown. Their best players are certain to be sold, starting with striker Kevin Phillips, but it may not be enough to keep the administrators at bay.

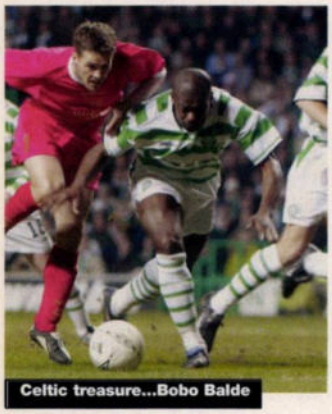
Going the other way will be Portsmouth and Leicester. Portsmouth, managed by former West Ham boss Harry Redknapp and bankrolled by Yugoslavia-born American Milan Mandaric, have been one of the few sides in the First Division to try to spend their way to promotion.

Redknapp, who succeeded Graeme Rix 13 months ago, quickly built a mix of ageing pros (Paul Merson, Steve Stone, Tim Sherwood), West Ham rejects (Svetoslav Todorov, Hayden Foxe) and promising youngsters (Gary O'Neill). Whether Portsmouth, perennial relegation-fighters when in the top division in recent seasons, can survive without extra reinforcements remains to be seen.

Leicester, relegated from the Premier League 12 months ago, won an immediate return despite being placed in administration. The former Fulham manager, Micky Adams, confirmed his reputation as one of the best young managers in English football by taking Leicester up on limited resources.

On the international front, criticism of Sven Goran Eriksson subsided after England's defeat of Turkey at Sunderland. The 2-0 scoreline was a little unfair on the technically-accomplished Turks. But Eriksson was justified in his uncharacteristically bold decision to start with Wayne Rooney.

The Everton teenager did not score, but gave a breathtakingly confident performance which only served to enhance his blossoming reputation. His club manager, David Moyes, has tried in vain to dampen expectations but Everton (and England) have unearthed the brightest domestic talent since Paul Gascoigne.



Celtic treasure...Bobo Balde

SCOTLAND

Defeat puts play-off place in doubt

THE national team displayed their now familiar inconsistency in the Euro 2004 double header. Against Iceland at Hampden Park, Berti Vogts' side, while failing to show any flair or imagination, produced a strong, assertive performance in a 2-1 victory. However, four days later on a freezing night in Kaunas, they lost 1-0 to Lithuania, 104th in the FIFA rankings, when a draw would have put the Scots close to securing at least the runners-up berth in Group 5.

Scotland are now faced with the need to take points from their qualifiers against Germany in June and September in order to retain any hope of qualifying for the finals.

The national team's fortunes contrast with those of League champions Celtic, who have helped restore credibility to Scottish club football with their exhilarating UEFA Cup run. One of the principal reasons for the club's success in Europe has been the rock-solid performances of Bobo Balde. The Guinean, signed from Toulouse in 2001, was originally regarded as little more than a defensive figurehead. But, under Martin O'Neill's tutelage, he has developed into a visionary centre-back whose distribution is now as effective as his tackling and heading abilities.

Perhaps distracted by their European exploits, Celtic have allowed Rangers to gain the initiative in the championship race. As the season enters its final stages, Alex McLeish looks to be heading for his first title victory since replacing Dick Advocaat as manager at Ibrox.

Alan Fairley

WALES

Country mourns Wilcox

WELSH football has been greatly saddened by the death of Tony Wilcox, the 46-year-old manager of Cwmbran Town, who died following a quadruple heart bypass operation.

Wilcox was one of only three managers to have stayed with the same club since the formation of the national League in 1992. He led the Crows to the inaugural championship, becoming the first manager to take a Welsh club into the Champions League. Wilcox led Cwmbran on more European campaigns than any other Welsh Premier League manager and was the first Welsh manager to take his club into all four UEFA competitions – Champions League, Cup-winners Cup, UEFA Cup and InterToto Cup.

In the League, Llanelli were relegated after a 3-0 home defeat by Rhyl in mid-April.

Mel Thomas

N IRELAND

Endebted Glentoran take top prize

GLENTORAN put their financial worries to the back of their minds when clinching the League title with a 4-0 win over Institute of Londonderry on April 12. The victory gave the East Belfast club, who recently announced debts of £1million, a 15-point lead over Portadown with four games to play.

While Glentoran scored an impressive 75 goals in the first 34 rounds, defensive strength was the true key to their success. Roy Coyle's men conceded just 16 goals.

Glentoran, hunting the Double, emphasised their superiority when humbling Portadown 6-1 in the Irish Cup semi-finals. Darren Armour scored a hat-trick, while Portadown had Vinny Arkins and Sean Convery sent off. The match, at Mourneview Park, Lurgan, was marred when rival fans confronted each other on the pitch after the game.

In the other semi-final, Coleraine beat Omagh Town 5-2 at Ballymena.

Roy Kitson

Pro-file Craig Bellamy

Welsh forward with quick feet and a temper to match

CRAIG BELLAMY is not only one of the most skilful young footballers in Europe, he is also one of the most volatile. He has enormous pace but, unfortunately, his temper is equally quick – which is why his progress has been hampered too often by problems with referees and cynical opponents.

But Bellamy's ability has also proved a significant asset for Wales in the Euro 2004 qualifiers. His winning goal against Italy in October, among other contributions, has helped to give Mark Hughes' squad a great chance to qualify for the finals for the first time.

Bellamy was born in Cardiff and played for his home-town club's juniors. But their coaches thought he was too small to make the grade and their loss proved a gain for Norwich. At 16 Bellamy became the youngest footballer to play for Wales' Under-21s and within two years was making his senior debut in a 0-0 draw with Jamaica. In October 1998 he scored his first senior goal, against Denmark in a Euro 2000 qualifier. Then, however, came injuries that effectively kept him out until Easter 2000.

After only six weeks back in League action, though, he was recalled by Wales and his re-emergence sparked transfer speculation. Newcastle were favourites to sign him, but, surprisingly, Coventry won the 'auction' with a bid of £6.5million.

One year later, though, the Midlands club were relegated and their financial problems meant Bellamy had to be sold. Newcastle bought him (at last) for 'only' £6m and were rewarded as he refound his old form in partnership with Alan Shearer. In 2001-02 they scored 32 Premiership goals between them (Shearer 23, Bellamy nine) to lift Newcastle into the Champions League. Bellamy was also hailed as Young Player of the Year by his fellow professionals.

This season has not been as easy. He was suspended twice in the Champions League after being sent off, first against Kyiv Dynamo, then Internazionale. But he made amends by scoring the crucial goal away to Feyenoord that put Newcastle into the second group phase.

No wonder there is talk Manchester United have been watching Bellamy and that Newcastle have offered him a new contract worth £40,000 a week. Newcastle value him at £15m. If they qualify for the Champions League again, and if Wales qualify for Euro 2004, his value will double.

The question is not whether Bellamy has the talent – just whether he can keep his cool for long enough to make the most of it.

Keir Radnedge

Fact file

Club Newcastle (Eng)
Country Wales
Previous clubs Norwich (Eng), Coventry (Eng)
Born July 13, 1979, in Cardiff
International debut March 1998, v Jamaica
International caps 20 (6 goals)

Bankrupt Lugano forced out of League

Ivar von Rulach on how the former champions hit the buffers

SWITZERLAND

LUGANO, the standard-bearers of professional football in Switzerland's Italian-speaking Tessin region, have been forced into bankruptcy and scratched from the remainder of this season's promotion/relegation play-offs after the dismantling of the first-team squad.

The club, who finished fourth in the Second Division regular season to earn the chance of promotion back to the top flight, have debts of almost £50 million. These stem from the activities of Helios Jermini, the club's president from 1995 until his death by suspected suicide in Lake Lugano last year.

It has yet to be decided whether Lugano will be allowed to take over the slot currently occupied by their under-21 side, Lugano 2, in minor National Liga 2 next season, or be banished to NL5, the lowest tier in Swiss football.

Battling in vain...Lugano, in white, may be forced to start again at the lowest level

The Lugano town attorney who investigated the case surrounding Jermini concluded that the president, who headed an investment institute, had illegally channelled clients' deposits into the club's coffers for years. His body was found in his car at the bottom of the lake after he failed to arrive in Italy for a meeting with investors who had been demanding the return of their money. The club's bankruptcy was declared after a number of the largest investors held out for repayment.

Lugano, who won the most recent of their three championship titles in 1949, qualified for a UEFA Cup place by finishing third in last season's top flight. However, they began the new season in the Second Division after voluntarily asking for demotion to assist in their restructuring.

The League has announced that all the points and results involving Lugano in the promotion/relegation play-offs will be struck off and the number of competing sides reduced to seven.

Players on loan at Lugano have returned to their clubs, the most prominent being Cameroon striker Jean-Michel Tchouga from champions Basle. The remaining squad members have been freed from their contracts to facilitate them finding new clubs.

Ton up...Frank De Boer

HOLLAND

Twente hit financial rocks

FC TWENTE have become the latest Dutch club to suffer a financial crunch after their founding company, Stichting FC Twente '65, was declared bankrupt after failing to pay tax debts. Although Twente '65 hold the club's professional licence, the Enschede side will be allowed to finish the season. They are now looking at drastic cost-cutting measures, however, including the offloading of several top-earning players at the end of the season.

The future of Vitesse Arnhem is looking brighter. The municipality have decided to buy the Gelredome and the ground belonging to it on the condition that the board would step down. Meanwhile, coach Mike Snoei has resigned because of poor results. Edward Sturing has stepped up for his third stint as caretaker.

Utrecht, another club in financial trouble, surprisingly beat League leaders PSV Eindhoven 2-1 to reach the Cup Final. They will face Feyenoord, 1-0 winners over Ajax in the other semi.

Frank De Boer became the first Dutch player to win 100 caps when facing the Czech Republic in the 1-1 home Euro 2004 qualifying draw. However, celebrations were muted given the result and the fact De Boer was blamed for the Czechs' equaliser.

Klaas-Jan Droppert

BELGIUM

Lommel's Cup defeat spares blushes

THE federation have been spared the embarrassment of staging a Cup Final featuring Lommel, the latest Belgian club to go into liquidation, after they were beaten 4-3 on aggregate by La Louviere in the semi-finals. Indeed, by June 1, the date of the Final, Lommel could have decided to go ahead with their merger with Third Division Overpelt. This might well have further ruffled feathers had Lommel by some fluke won the Cup and qualified for next season's UEFA Cup.

It is La Louviere's first appearance in the Final, where they will meet St Truiden, 1-0 aggregate winners over Germinal Beerschot Antwerpen.

Lommel's financial plight had already destined them to drop to the Third Division next season, regardless of their League position. They are likely to finish in the drop zone anyway after having to forfeit their remaining games – all being awarded as 5-0 defeats – because of the absence of unpaid first-team players.

Lommel are the fifth Belgian club in less than two years to go into liquidation, following Harelbeke, Eendracht Aalst, RWD Molenbeek and Mechelen.

Nicholas Harling

PORTUGAL

Porto's treble chance

FC PORTO kept their hopes of a treble alive after beating Second Division Naval 1° de Maio 2-0 in the Portuguese Cup semi-finals. The victory came just a few days after their 4-1 thrashing of Lazio in the first leg of the UEFA Cup semi-finals and a week after maintaining their 13-point League lead over closest challengers Benfica with a 3-0 home win against bottom side Vitoria Setubal with seven games to play.

Porto will face Uniao Leiria, 1-0 victors over Pacos Ferreira in the other semi, in the Final on June 15.

Setubal's defeat by Porto proved the final game in charge for coach Diamantino Miranda, who had been in the post for only two months. Carlos Cardoso has now been handed the task of rescuing Setubal from the drop.

Another struggling side, Sporting Braga, have suspended Spanish coach Castro Santos indefinitely for alleged breaches of discipline.

The national team have pulled out of a summer tour of the Far East because of concerns over the

region's SARS virus outbreak. Portugal had planned to play South Korea in Seoul on June 8 and Japan in Saitama three days later.

Alberto da Silva

AUSTRIA

Swiss League link-up looms into view

EURO 2008 hosts Austria and Switzerland hope to take their co-operation a stage further by having their leading clubs compete in a cross-border championship, the so-called Alpenliga.

Representatives of the two leagues have met club officials to discuss the matter, and the initial signs are that the concept has much backing. In a poll of the 10 Austrian top-flight clubs, only Pasching and SV Ried were against the idea, while top Swiss sides such as Basle, Grasshopper, Servette and St Gallen are said to be interested.

A feasibility study has been commissioned, with a report expected in three to four months. "We believe an Austro-Swiss league will be more attractive for spectators and have much more financial potential to bring in more sponsors," said Austrian League chairman Peter Westenthaler, one of the most fervent advocates of the project. "Business-wise it makes sense. The argument that high transport costs make it impossible isn't valid. However, it is still a long way off. On a scale of one to a hundred, we're only at two."

Two models have been proposed for the Alpenliga. The first would consist of nine Austrian and nine Swiss clubs playing home and away. A less ambitious scheme would have the two countries holding their own autumn championship, followed by spring play-offs featuring the top six from each nation.

Westenthaler and Grasshopper president Peter Widmer are confident of making their dream a reality for the 2005-06 season. The question is, will UEFA go along?

Nick Bidwell

REP OF IRELAND

Crowe has scoring start

GLEN CROWE, the Premier Division's top scorer for the past three years, made a great start in the new summer season by scoring the only goal in Bohemians win over UCD. The forward, dubbed the 'Ginger Magician', is bidding to become the first player to be top scorer four seasons in a row in the Republic.

Crowe's early form earned him a recall to the national squad for the friendly against Norway on April 30.

The FAI is planning to leave its present headquarters in Merrion Square, in the heart of Georgian Dublin, and move to more spacious offices on the outskirts of the city.

Sean Creedon

Record target...Glen Crowe

LIECHTENSTEIN

Vaduz attract record crowd

FC VADUZ attracted a ground and club record crowd of 4,400 to the Rheinpark-stadion in late March for their Swiss League promotion play-off clash with St Gallen, which ended 1-1.

Vaduz drew again the following week, 0-0 with Lucerne at home, in a game marked by the emotional return to the side of Vaidotas Slekys, who had been injured in the car crash that killed team-mate Marzio Morocutti. The match also saw the debut of Brazilian signing Paulo Vogt from Winterthur, as well as a red card for Vaduz coach Walter Hormann for criticising the referee.

In the Liechtenstein Cup, Balzers booked their place in the Final with a 1-0 victory over Eschen-Mauren 2. Vaduz were due to play Eschen-Mauren 1 in the other semi.

Graeme Crawford

Pro-file Deco

Portugal's Brazil-born maestro at the eye of an eligibility storm

FC PORTO'S brilliant Brazil-born playmaker Deco, freshly granted Portuguese citizenship, was not exactly welcomed with open arms when called up by his adopted country recently. In fact, Portugal midfielders Rui Costa and Luis Figo were openly hostile to the idea of *a la carte* nationality. "There's a reason why they call it the national team of Portugal," said Rui Costa. Figo declared: "National anthems can be learnt but are not felt. If you are patriotic, you would only think of playing for your own nation's team."

Such statements were hardly to the liking of new Portugal coach Luiz Felipe Scolari. He had shown precious little inclination to compromise in leading his native Brazil to triumph at the last World Cup and, as far as he was concerned, bringing Deco into the fold made perfect sense. The little midfield orchestrator had been quite sublime this season for his club, sweeping all before them in the League and UEFA Cup. If he was now eligible for Portugal, Scolari was in no mood to deprive himself of Deco's finesse and trickery.

Indeed, he sent a shot across the bows of Figo, Rui Costa and anyone else who might be tempted to question his authority over the right to select who he wants. "I'm the one who picks the national team, not the players. I don't give in to pressure from anybody. Those who disagree have the option not to play."

Yet still the controversy rumbled on. Federation president Gilberto Madail denied Deco's claim that the Portuguese football authorities had encouraged him to throw in his lot with them. Portugal's Minister of Internal Administration, Figueiredo Lopes, also found himself drawn into the media frenzy, accused of offering Deco preferential treatment in his naturalisation application. Lopes retorted that since Deco had been playing in Portugal since 1996 – with Alverca, Salgueiros and now FC Porto – he met the residency requirement.

The last word belonged to Deco. Fate had decreed his debut for Portugal would pit him against his former compatriots from Brazil on the familiar turf of FC Porto's Das Antas stadium. He made the most of the theatrical circumstances, scoring the winner with a trademark crafty free-kick after coming on as a second-half substitute.

With Sporting Lisbon's Joao Pinto past his best, 25-year-old Deco looks just the man to replace him. "I didn't decide to go with Portugal just because I was never picked by Brazil," says Deco. "Portugal has been my home for seven years; it's here I have established myself as a player. I owe everything to Portuguese football and am honoured to play for them."

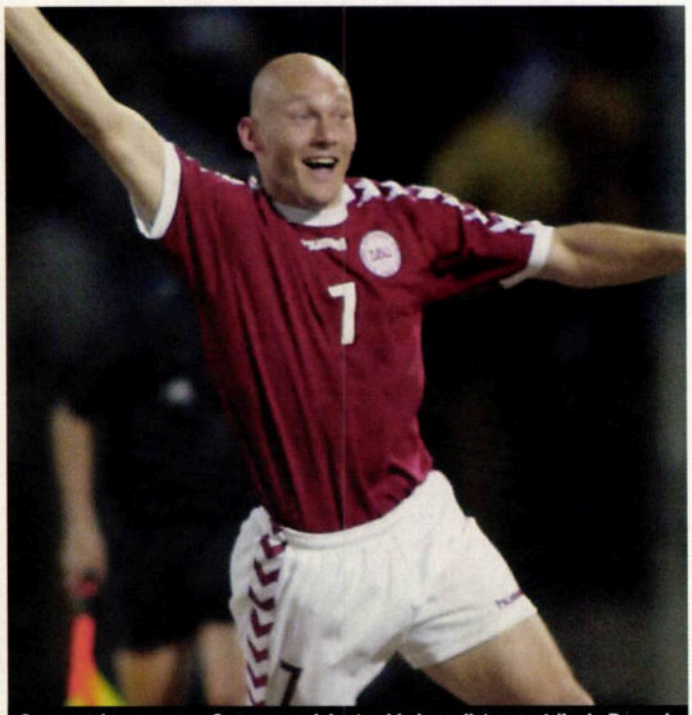
Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club FC Porto
Country Portugal
Born August 27, 1977, in Sao Bernardo do Campo, Brazil
Previous clubs Guarani (Bra), Palmeiras (Bra), Nacional Sao Paulo (Bra), Corinthians Alagoano (Bra), Alverca, Salgueiros
International debut March 2003, v Brazil
International caps 2 (1 goal)
Honours Portuguese Cup 2000, 2001 (FC Porto)

Gravesen & co give Olsen the willies

Jim Holden reports a bizarre week for the national team on and off the pitch



Crazy goal, crazy guy...Gravesen celebrates his long-distance strike in Romania

DENMARK

DENMARK endured the craziest four days imaginable of international football, their hopes of qualifying for Euro 2004 left in peril when a stunning 5-2 win in Romania was followed by an appalling 2-0 home defeat by Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The dramas started even before the football when midfielder Thomas Gravesen's practical joke of baring his genitals over the head of team-mate Claus Jensen was captured by a photographer and published in a Romanian magazine. Back home the incident caused much merriment and only added to Gravesen's folk-hero status. But Denmark manager Morten Olsen was not amused and carpeted the Everton player, threatening that any more of such antics would put him out of the squad.

Naturally enough, Gravesen then became the playing hero in Bucharest with an extraordinary 50-yard goal that turned a strange match in Denmark's favour. He returned a goal-kick straight back over the keeper's head to make the score 2-2, and the Danes' subsequent romp to victory on a difficult, spongy pitch put them top of Group 2.

Olsen was humble in triumph; four days later he and his team were humiliated in Copenhagen. Over-confidence led to complacency against the unfancied Bosnians, whose neutralising of Danish wingers Dennis Rommedahl and Martin Jorgensen proved key to the outcome – something the visitors had predicted before the game. Immediately after it, Olsen took the blame, saying the defeat was due to his poor team selection and strategy. Twenty-four hours later, after the first bout of sustained media criticism, he was threatening to quit. "If this goes on I won't be able to do my job," said Olsen. But another few days of reflection brought a calmer mood and acknowledgement that the next home match, against new group leaders Norway on June 7, will be the real test.

On the domestic front there were two giant collisions in four days between FC Copenhagen and Brondby. The first, in front of a 40,000 crowd, brought a 1-1 draw which steadied Copenhagen after an uncertain start to the spring League campaign. But Brondby won 1-0 in their Cup quarter-final clash to secure a last-four meeting with AaB Aalborg. The other semi-final will be between Viborg and FC Midtjylland.

NORWAY

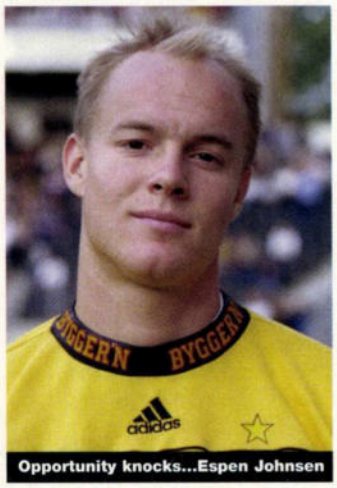
Keeper Johnsen grabs chance with both hands

YOUNG Rosenborg keeper Espen Johnsen took full advantage of Arni Arason's contract dispute with the club by taking the man-of-the-match plaudits during the champions' tight 1-0 home win over Valerenga on the first day of the season.

The 23-year-old's clean sheet came after years as deputy to Arason, an Icelandic international, who is out of favour because of his unwillingness to sign a new deal.

Harald Brattbakk scored the goal that gave Rosenborg a winning start under new coach Aage Hareide, though the visitors could consider themselves unlucky not to grab a draw. "I felt we were the better team as the match went on," said Valerenga coach Kjetil Rekdal, the former Norway midfielder. "Having created so many chances, it was very frustrating not to get a goal."

Viking's new coach, Kjell Inge Olsen, also had reason to celebrate as his side went top on goal difference after trouncing local rivals Bryne 3-0. Long-term injury victim Bjarte Lunde Aarsheim marked his return to action by scoring the final goal.



Opportunity knocks...Espen Johnsen

Lyn coach Teitur Thordarsson had to settle for a 0-0 draw with 'pupil' Mons Ivar Mjelde at home to former club, Brann. The visitors' coach played under Thordarsson for several seasons at Brann.

Promoted Tromso beat fellow new boys Aalesund 3-2 away after a tough battle, with young striker Morten Gamst Pedersen scoring twice.

One of the aristocrats of Norwegian football, Fredrikstad, celebrated their return to the Second Division by beating Skeid 2-0 at home. More than 6,000 turned out to see the match, which marked the debut of Knut Eggen, son of former Rosenborg boss Nils Arne, as Fredrikstad coach.

Sigurd Odegaard

FINLAND

Muurinen under pressure

THE future of national coach Antti Muurinen is hanging in the balance following Finland's comprehensive 2-0 defeat by Italy in the Euro 2004 qualifiers. His contract expires at the end of the year, but already there have been demands to replace him.

Muurinen has received the backing of FA chairman Pekka Hamalainen, who has warned that Finland probably cannot afford to hire a big-name foreign coach as many would like. But the situation may change should the team perform below expectations against Italy and Serbia & Montenegro in June.

The defeat by a Francesco Totti-inspired Italy – to two goals by Christian Vieri – left Finland fourth in qualifying Group 9, four points behind the *Azzurri* in second place. Muurinen's side, lacking injured captain Jari Litmanen, were outclassed and not helped by some eyebrow-raising selections. The coach insisted on fielding Aki Riihilahti despite reports from his club, Crystal Palace, that he was not match-fit. Alas, their verdict proved right as Riihilahti had to be substituted in the first half.

"The cruel fact is that our pool of top-class players is still very small," said Muurinen. "Totti and Vieri were irresistible, and there was very little we could do about it."

Pentti Hietanen

ICELAND

KR's strength could prove a weakness

ON PAPER, the strength of the squad assembled by champions KR during the close season should put them far out of reach of most of the top division sides when it comes to

League honours this year. Indeed, KR have already served notice of intent by beating perennial bridesmaids Fylkir to lift the recently-resurrected Icelandic Super Cup.

However, KR coach Villum Thor Thorsson may find his diplomatic skills tested to the full as he strives to maintain morale among his squad. Some of the players will inevitably find themselves consigned to the bench over the course of the season, the brevity of which gives little scope for real squad rotation.

The national side saw their dream of claiming a Euro 2004 qualifying play-off place virtually disappear into the breeze that swirled around Hampden Park as they slumped to defeat against a Scotland team who, for the most part, looked little better. While Scotland's subsequent defeat in Lithuania leaves Iceland with a slim mathematical chance of achieving the FA's declared goal of second spot in Group 5, a battle for third place would appear to be a more realistic.

Rab Christie

SWEDEN

Allback double does the talking

MARCUS ALLBACK, who has hardly played for club side Aston Villa this season, was the hero of Sweden's 2-1 Euro 2004 win in Hungary, scoring both goals.

The forward, whose starting place would have been threatened in normal circumstances because of his lack of club action, received the nod because of the suspension of Ajax striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

"My performance was a healthy reminder to everyone that I am still in business," said Allback. "Things haven't gone that well for me at Villa, but I don't have any doubts about my own ability."

Allback outshone Henrik Larsson, who had been coaxed out of international retirement as coaches Lars Lagerback and Tommy Soderberg sought to overcome Ibrahimovic's absence.

Sweden relied on their usual hard work and organisation to overcome the Hungarians. In goal, Djurgardens' Andreas Isaksson took a further step to ensuring he is Magnus Hedman's long-term replacement, while Benfica's Anders Andersson reasserted his claim for a midfield starting berth.

Domestically, a wrangle between Landskrona and rising midfielder Alexander Farnerud has been hogging the headlines. It centres on whether the player's contract runs out at the end of the 2003 season or in 2004 as the club claim. A court case could follow, with a number of foreign clubs, including Marseille, watching the situation closely.

Pentti Hietanen

Now leave me out!...Sweden's Allback is ecstatic after scoring in Hungary

Pro-file Tomas Razanauskas

Journeyman putting Lithuania on path to Euro progress

LITHUANIA midfielder Tomas Razanauskas, scorer of vital Euro 2004 qualifying goals in the 1-1 draw with Germany and 1-0 win over Scotland, is deriving infinitely more satisfaction on the international stage than at club level.

The 27-year-old has often underperformed for Greek side Akratitos, who are struggling to maintain their top-flight status and beset by internal strife – they are on their third coach of the season and in January the coaching and administrative staff resigned in protest at the way the club was being run by president Nikos Papidimas.

But Razanauskas has been far more impressive for his country. Playing in an advanced position on the right of midfield against Germany in Nurnberg, his ability to find space and good use of the ball posed all manner of problems to a surprisingly nervy home defence. Seventeen minutes from time, Razanauskas capped a fine display with a superb equaliser, running on to a through ball from Darius Maciulevicius and slipping the ball adroitly past Oliver Kahn.

"To hold the World Cup runners-up to a draw on their home ground is unbelievable," says Razanauskas. "It's one of the most important results in the history of our national team. After taking an early lead, Germany assumed it was going to carry on like that. But we dug in and proved we are strong both physically and mentally."

Four days later, Razanauskas' penalty winner against Scotland in Kaunas gave Lithuania a sniff of what would be sensational progress in the tournament. "Qualification is still a long way off but we have given ourselves a chance," he says.

Known in some quarters as the 'Baltic Platini', Razanauskas has much of the classic playmaker about him, but he is hugely versatile too. Over the years he has also played in the 'hole' behind the strikers, in a midfield holding role, as a wing-back and at centre-back because of his strength in the air. "Tomas is a very intelligent player," says Lithuania assistant coach Valdas Ivanauskas. "He is invaluable to us."

No doubt his recent exploits will result in him continuing his grand tour of Europe. Since starting as a 16-year-old with Panerys Vilnius, he has turned out for no fewer than eight other clubs in countries as far flung as Russia, Switzerland and now Greece. Where next for the footballing backpacker?

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Akratitos (Gre)
Country Lithuania
Born January 7, 1976, in Vilnius
Previous clubs Panerys Vilnius, Zalgiris Vilnius, Kamaz Naberezhnye Chelny (Rus), Torpedo Moscow (Rus), Flora Tallinn (Est), Servette (Swi), Malmo (Swe), Brann (Nor)
International debut March 1995, v Greece
International caps 32 (5 goals)
Honours Estonian League 1998; Estonian Cup 1998; Swiss League 1999

Rustu endures Fener crisis

...but the national keeper looks set to leave Istanbul in the summer. Suna Erdem reports

TURKEY

AFTER the national team's 2-0 Euro 2004 defeat by England in Sunderland, it seems likely that the crunch return tie in October will take place in Fenerbahce's Sukru Saracoglu stadium in Asian Istanbul, the biggest and most hostile of the city's grounds. But international keeper Rustu Recber will find little comfort in finally playing for Turkey at his club's home stadium, if, indeed, he is still at Fener by then.

This season has been miserable for Fenerbahce as they slumped to a series of defeats, leaving them more than 20 points behind leaders Besiktas. The club have already lost two coaches this term – Werner Lorant was sacked; Oguz Cetin resigned – and have just appointed 67-year-old Tamer Guney in a temporary capacity as they have yet to find a permanent replacement. Meanwhile, Fener have lost the services of star players Ariel Ortega, who has returned to Argentina, and Israeli forward Haim Revivo, who crossed the floor to rivals Galatasaray. Now young international Serhat Akin has gone AWOL amid reports he will take the club to FIFA over unpaid wages.

Many commentators are wondering what Rustu is still doing there, and worried supporters have begun displaying banners directed at the keeper saying "please don't leave us". But with the keeper's contract due to expire this summer and Arsenal among a clutch of clubs keen to sign him, his departure appears imminent.

That said, Rustu was the motivating force behind Fenerbahce's brave display in a 3-3 draw against Genclerbirligi, Guney's first match in charge. The team, spearheaded by talented Under-21 international Tuncay Sanli, also included the young Semih Senturk – who scored twice on his starting debut. With this season a washout, Fener can only prepare the foundations for next term; but finally, just maybe, the club are looking to home-grown young talent for salvation, rather than showy, expensive but inappropriate transfers.

Motivating force...Rustu gave a committed performance in coach Guney's first match

Heroic acts...Milan Rapajic

CROATIA

Ex-Hajduk men face taxing questions

TEN former executives of Hajduk Split, among them two of the club's ex-players and an ex-Croat federation president, are facing prosecution for tax evasion, along with several other alleged misdemeanours.

The former players – Ivan Buljan and Ivica Surjak – ex-federation boss Nadan Vidosevic and their seven co-accused are alleged to have evaded tax payments running into millions of pounds.

During the presidency of the late Franjo Tudjman, a great supporter of football, in particular Dinamo Zagreb, the Croat government had a lax policy towards tax payments from the soccer world. However, the new government is keen to clamp down on any such malpractice, including retrospective examples, in order to avoid accusations of corruption. It seems likely therefore that a lot of executives from other clubs, the federation and top-level players – who, it is claimed, received illegal tax-free bonuses during the Tudjman era – will come under scrutiny in the wake of the current legal case.

Hajduk winger Milan Rapajic was the hero of Croatia's two recent Euro 2004 qualifying ties, scoring both goals in the 2-0 win against Andorra and creating two of his side's goals in the 4-0 thumping of Belgium. The victories gave some respite to coach Otto Baric, who had threatened to quit if results had not gone Croatia's way because his side had taken only one point from their first two qualifiers.

Baric was no doubt thankful that Monaco forward Dado Prso made a scoring debut in the Belgium game. The coach had failed to persuade veteran forward Alen Boksic to change his mind about his retirement from football, while regular first-choice striker Ivica Olic was unable to play because of a broken nose.

Rapajic was also the star of Hajduk's vital victory over League leaders Dinamo Zagreb. He scored the only goal of the game to narrow the gap at the top to four points with eight games to play.

Zdravko Reic

GREECE

Giannina to fight massive points deduction

TOP DIVISION side Giannina, stunned by a remarkable 75-point deduction by the Greek federation (EPO) as punishment for fees owed to 18 current and former players, have said they will appeal against the ruling at a civil court. Their decision comes in the wake of EPAE, the Greek association of professional soccer clubs, ratifying the penalty.

The points deduction, representing three points for all 25 games played this season at the time it was handed down, will continue to grow until payment is made. Giannina's punishment was compounded when they were ordered to play two home games at a neutral ground after an outbreak of hooliganism following a match against leaders Panathinaikos.

Two Second Division clubs, Athinaikos and Panaigialeios, have effectively been relegated after also being handed swingeing points cuts for non-payment of players.

Lou Economopoulos

SERBIA & MONTENEGRO

Postponement a relief

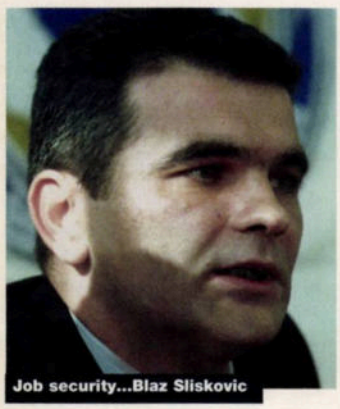
THE national team gave another disappointing performance during the 2-1 friendly defeat at home to Bulgaria at the end of March. The encounter was supposed to be a warm-up game for the Euro 2004 qualifier against Wales in Belgrade, scheduled for the following week. However, the tie was postponed until August 20 because of the state of emergency in Serbia, in place since the assassination of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic.

Given the poor displays against Bulgaria and in the previous Euro qualifier, a 2-2 home draw against Azerbaijan in February, local fans regarded the postponement as a piece of good fortune. Many had feared a defeat by Wales, a result that would practically have ended the chances of Serbia & Montenegro qualifying for the finals in Portugal.

In the League, Red Star ended Partizan's 15-game winning run when beating the leaders 2-0 at home in the 120th Belgrade derby. The result, also Lothar Matthaus' first defeat in nine games since taking over at Partizan, still left Red Star 16 points off the top with eight games left.

Red Star are still in with a chance of silverware, however, after beating Second Division Buducnost Banatski Dvor 1-0 away in the Cup semi-finals. In the Final they will meet Sartid Smederevo, who won 3-1 on penalties at home to Zeleznik Belgrade in the other semi after a 1-1 draw. The match winner was keeper Dragan Zilic, who saved no fewer than four penalties, one in normal time.

Vladimir Novak



Job security...Blaz Sliskovic

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Win over Danish saves Blaz's bacon

NATIONAL coach Blaz Sliskovic went into the two recent Euro 2004 qualifiers expecting to lose his job following the defeats by Romania and Norway earlier in the campaign. However, Bosnia's shock 2-0 defeat of group leaders Denmark in Copenhagen, on the back of a 2-0 win at home to Luxembourg, means that Sliskovic's tenure is secure – at least until the end of the qualifiers.

The coach and his players were welcomed as heroes at the airport on their return from Denmark. "I am very happy because I have finally seen that our players were strongly motivated, and that brought us victory," said Sliskovic.

The top two in the League, Leotar and Zeljeznicar, as the season enters its final stages are also set for a showdown in the Cup Final.

Zdravko Reic

Round-up

Kmetec boosts Olimpija's bid

THE goals of Marko Kmetec, who recently received his first call-up to **SLOVENIA'S** national squad, have fired Olimpija's challenge for the championship. The Ljubljana side were joint top with Publikum with nine rounds left, with the two sides scheduled to meet on the final day of the season. They will also clash in the Cup Final.

Zdravko Reic

Sliema scored a last-minute winner against Birkirkara to open an eight-point lead in **MALTA'S** championship play-off pool. The Blues also left it late to overcome Pieta Hotspurs in the FA Trophy quarter-finals, scoring an extra-time winner to stay on course for the Double.

David Carabott won his 114th cap during the 6-0 Euro 2004 drubbing by France, breaking the all-time Maltese record.

Domenico Aquilina

Pro-file Stelios Giannakopoulos

Olympiakos midfielder putting one over on his former favourites

AS FAR as Panathinaikos are concerned, Greece and Olympiakos midfielder Stelios Giannakopoulos is the one that got away. The Athens-born player was a devoted Panathinaikos fan in his youth and would have given anything to wear the famous green shirt as a professional. However, the only Athenian club initially willing to take him on were Ethnikos, and, after a spell with Paniliakos, old allegiances had to be forgotten when Panathinaikos' city rivals Olympiakos moved in to sign him in 1996.

How it must pain 'Pana' to watch one of their own doing so well for the opposition. Not only has Giannakopoulos starred for an Olympiakos side that have won the last six Greek League titles, but he has also carried on improving. Now, at the age of 28, he is unquestionably one of the country's most accomplished performers.

Giannakopoulos is highly determined, mobile and a thoughtful user of the ball; he has been quite outstanding on the right side of midfield this season – though, on occasion, he has filled in centrally or on the left; and is also a contender to be Greece's top League scorer.

"Throughout my career, I've always supplied my share of goals," says Giannakopoulos. "I like to get in the box and know how to finish. I think I've been in good form for two or three years. But it's more important for Olympiakos to carry on winning. Following the disappointment of our early elimination from the Champions League, we are doubly motivated to compensate with a seventh League title in a row and are confident of achieving it."

Yet despite his excellence this term, Giannakopoulos is still not certain of a place in Greece's starting line-up. National coach Otto Rehhagel has often preferred AEK's Vassilis Lakis on the right flank, but may have to revise his opinion soon. While Lakis is quick and skilful, Giannakopoulos offers more in the way of a scoring threat.

Giannakopoulos is a clear first choice when it comes to honesty, however. After being awarded the penalty from which Olympiakos secured a 4-3 win over Aigaleo last season, the midfielder publicly admitted he had dived to mislead the referee. "When I finally walk away from football, I want fans to remember me as a good player and not for such events as the penalty against Aigaleo," he declared. "I want Aigaleo fans to understand that what happened was a split-second act. I would like to ask for their forgiveness." Commendable words, if a little late.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Olympiakos
Country Greece
Born July 12, 1974, in Athens
Previous clubs Ethnikos, Paniliakos
International debut August 1997, v Cyprus
International caps 22 (4 goals)
Honours Greek League 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002; Greek Cup 1999

Sparks fly as Spartak lose again

Victor Gusev on the allegations of 'plotting' against the former champions

RUSSIA

MOSCOW SPARTAK president Andrei Chervichenko accused Russian Football Union boss Vyacheslav Koloskov of "plotting against Spartak" after his side lost 3-2 to city rivals CSKA. Chervichenko claimed Koloskov did not want to see Spartak, nine-times Russian champions, top of the Premiere League any more.

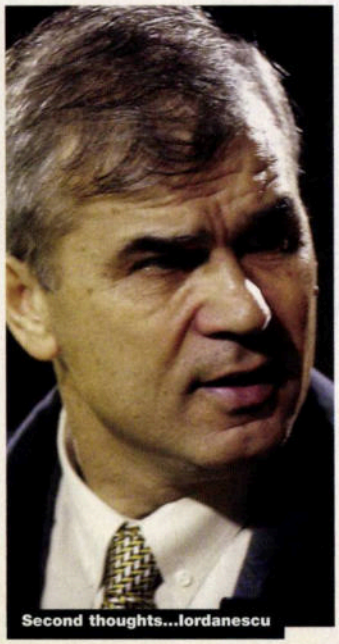
The allegation stemmed from a controversial 77th-minute penalty awarded to CSKA, from which they scored, when Spartak were 2-1 up. Chervichenko called referee Valentin Ivanov's decision "a shame", adding "this so-called referee was following Koloskov's instructions".

A late goal from Czech midfielder Jiri Jarosik – to maintain his run of having scored in all four games since joining CSKA for a Russian record £3.7million – sealed his side's victory. He thus maintained CSKA's 100 per cent record and condemned Spartak to another week in the relegation zone. They had opened the season with a 0-0 draw at Torpedo Metallurg then lost 2-1 at home to Spartak-Alaniya.

"In our football, referees are either bribed or pressed from above," Chervichenko added. "If we continue this way our national team will be losing not only to Albania, but even to Mongolia" – referring to the shock 3-1 defeat in Albania in a recent Euro 2004 qualifier.

Koloskov ridiculed the accusations. However, the RFU's control and expertise committee did acknowledge Ivanov's decision was incorrect, and the referee (son of Soviet star Valentin Ivanov) was suspended for two games. Chervichenko was fined £100 for "unethical behaviour".

Worth every penny...£3.7m Jarosik scored in his first four CSKA games



Second thoughts...Iordanescu

ROMANIA

Iordanescu persuaded to stay

ANGHEL IORDANESCU has reversed his decision to quit as national coach following the 5-2 home Euro 2004 defeat by Denmark after lobbying from federation president Mircea Sandu. The situation will be reviewed after the qualifying campaign finishes in the autumn.

"When I said I was quitting, I was very, very upset," said Iordanescu, who took charge for a second time in January last year. "I felt the man who got it wrong – me – should pay. But I realised Sandu is right when he says it's better to keep the job until the end and I would harm the players if I were to quit. I know best the problems that exist within the team."

Romania have now lost both home qualifiers against their two main Group 2 rivals, having gone down 1-0 to Norway in Bucharest in October.

Defender Iulian Filipescu made himself available for selection again on the strength of Iordanescu's change of heart, having announced he was quitting the international scene immediately after the Denmark defeat. However, Romania's veteran captain Gheorghe Popescu insisted that the game would be his last.

In the League, Sportul Studentesc successfully appealed against a points deduction imposed for failing to pay a £100,000 debt to Steaua Bucharest for the transfer of Florin Maxim. Under FA rules, any club owing money to another are meant to have one point deducted per week after the payment deadline. However, Sportul won their points back after claiming they were owed £130,000 by Bulgarian side Litex Lovech for another transfer.

Michael Bowesfield

UKRAINE

Referees in chaos

THE country's referees have been in crisis following accusations of corruption from top division coaches and chaos within the federation's referee committee.

Valeriy Yaremchenko, head coach of League leaders Shakhtar Donetsk, made the most serious allegations following his side's shock 2-0 defeat by bottom-of-the-table Chornomorets. He claimed the referee gave a number of decisions against Shakhtar because he was in the pay of an unnamed third party.

The chaos within the referees' committee started three months ago after the head, Serhiy Tatulyan, retired on health grounds. His successor, Olexander Kozachenko, lasted only eight weeks before being kicked out because of alcohol addiction. The new chief is Victor Derdo, who stated his first priority was to restore morale.

Shakhtar recovered from defeat at Chornomorets to beat Illichivets 4-2 at home and city rivals Metalurh 2-0 away to maintain a four-point lead over Kyiv Dynamo.

Oleg Zadernovsky

CZECH REPUBLIC

Sparta close in after derby win

SPARTA PRAGUE took a decisive step towards their 29th League title by beating city rivals and closest challengers Slavia 2-0 in mid-April.

The win, secured with second-half goals from substitute Marek Kincl and striker Tomas Jun, took Sparta seven points clear of Slavia with seven games to play.

It also represented an impressive return to form, since just three days earlier they had suffered their worst home defeat for 15 years, losing 4-0 to Ceske Budejovice in the Czech Cup. The Prague team had fielded a weakened side ahead of the derby game, but the size and manner of their defeat was still a huge shock.

Meanwhile, Slavia were set to lodge an official complaint with the FA over Sparta fans' racial taunting of their Brazilian striker Evandro Adauto Da Silva.

Sam Beckwith

BELARUS

Teenage talent opts for Ukraine

ARTEM MILEVSKY, the most talented player to emerge from Belarus in recent years, has opted to play for Ukraine after applying for citizenship. The 18-year-old forward, who recently signed a five-year contract with Kyiv Dynamo, made his debut for a Ukrainian youth side in a friendly against Turkey. Ukrainian law permits citizenship applications to be considered even when neither parent is Ukrainian, as in Milevsky's case.

"My parents were not happy," said Milevsky." But I opted to play for Ukraine because Belarus is less developed in football terms."

Top division side Dnepr-Transmash have signed brothers Serhiy and Illiya Galuza from Ukraine's Chornomorets and Andriy Gonchar from Obolon Kyiv.

Oleg Zadernovsky

Calling it a day...Kinkladze

GEORGIA

Chivadze quits national post

NATIONAL coach Alexander Chivadze has stood down after 11 months of his second spell in charge because of his team's poor showing in the Euro 2004 campaign. "We have lost virtually all chance of qualification," said the 48-year-old, who announced his decision shortly after the 0-0 home draw with Switzerland on April 2, their sole point in three qualifiers to date.

Stalwarts Temuri Ketsbaia and Georgi Kinkladze have announced their international retirement. Ketsbaia, 35, is Georgia's all-time leading scorer with 17 goals in 52 matches; Kinkladze, 29, scored eight in 49 games.

Oleg Zadernovsky

Round-up

Defeat at last for CSKA

CSKA SOFIA'S season-long, 18-game unbeaten run in **BULGARIA** was ended when they went down 2-1 at home to Cherno More in mid-April. City rivals Levski took advantage, closing the gap on the leaders to one point after a 1-0 win away to Naftex.

However, Levski suffered problems off the field, with former Bulgarian international Nasko Sirakov quitting as managing director after a bust-up with fellow board members. "My rights were gradually taken away and I felt I could no longer help Levski," said Sirakov, who was in the 1986 and 1994 World Cup squads and a former player at the club.

Mihail Valchev has quit as Rilski Sportist coach after a 2-1 defeat by Botev left them 10 points from safety.

Michael Bowesfield

Wisla Krakow took a step towards the **POLISH** League title when coming from behind to beat champions Legia Warsaw 2-1 at home in early April. Wisla followed up with a 1-0 win at Pogon to go two points clear of GKS Katowice, who have maintained their title challenge despite having a budget only a seventh the size of Wisla's and having sold top scorer Krzysztof Gajtkowski to Lech Poznan because of financial troubles.

An Arka Gdynia fan was killed during street fighting with supporters of Slask Wroclaw as the clubs met in Wroclaw for a Second Division game. More than 200 hooligans were arrested.

Dariusz Kurowski

In **HUNGARY**, Ferencvaros' 2-1 win against MTK in mid-April gave them a four-point lead at the top over their Budapest rivals. The game turned on two penalties, one converted for Ferencvaros by veteran midfielder Peter Lipcsei, the other missed by MTK captain Bela Illes. At the bottom, a hat-trick by Laszlo Megyesi gave Bekescsaba a precious 3-1 win over fellow strugglers Kispest-Honved.

Peterjon Cresswell

Slovan Bratislava opened up a nine-point gap over **SLOVAKIAN** champions MSK Zilina after the latter took just five points from four games. Slovan also overcame Zilina in the Cup semi-finals. They will meet Matador Puchov in the Final.

Ed Holt

Next Month...

The full story of the 2003 UEFA Champions League Final

PLUS UEFA Cup Final and end-of-season reports from across Europe

STAY AHEAD OF THE GAME
WORLD SOCCER

JULY ISSUE ON SALE JUNE 6

Crumbling edifice...Rio de Janeiro's legendary Maracana stadium is in need of major refurbishment

Order, order!

Brian Homewood on the two government bills designed to clean up Brazilian football

BRAZIL

BRAZILIAN football directors are finally going to be forced to clean up their act. Congress has in the last month approved two bills intended to bring greater transparency to the game and give the long-suffering supporters a fair deal.

The first, nicknamed the 'Clean Up Football Bill', will force clubs and federations – including the Brazilian Confederation (CBF) – to make public their accounts annually and ban the sale abroad of players under 18.

Once the bill comes into effect – which now depends on the formality of being approved by President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva – the clubs and federations will have to start making public their finances every April, while public prosecutors will have the power to inspect a club's accounts. Directors found to have committed "fraudulent administration" will be held responsible and could face confiscation of their personal property "to cover the losses".

Players will only be eligible for transfer to foreign clubs once they have reached 18 to avoid what one Congressman described as the "trafficking of minors".

The second bill, known as the 'Supporters' Statute', aims to provide better conditions for fans, who currently have to brave violence from other supporters, decrepit stadiums and chaotic ticket sales to follow their teams. This bill will force clubs to publicise attendances and gate receipts at every match, announce how many people were allowed to watch without paying, and provide safe and well-organised stadiums. It even insists on clean toilets – certainly a ground-breaking move in Brazilian stadiums. It obliges match organisers to put tickets on sale at least 72 hours before kick-off, while federations will have to announce match dates and times well in advance and make sure the information is widely publicised.

Another measure is the appointment of ombudsmen, who will be responsible for hearing complaints from supporters.

Naturally, many clubs and federations are going to have to change their ways. The fixture list has often been a concept that Brazilian federations have had trouble grasping; many stadiums, including the world-famous Maracana in Rio de Janeiro, are in complete disrepair; and supporters are forced to scramble and push for hours to buy tickets for big matches, while touts are allowed to operate with impunity.

Attendances are rarely publicised nowadays – the crowd used to jeer when they were announced because the official figure always seemed too small for the number of people in the stadium – and kick-off times are often changed at the last minute without the public being told.

Safety concerns

As far as safety goes, the Supporters' Statute is designed to prevent a repeat of serious incidents like that during the Final of the 2000 Brazilian championship between Vasco da Gama and Sao Caetano. This was abandoned after a fence collapsed at Vasco's Sao Januario stadium under a crush of fans. More than 50 people were injured and witnesses said the stadium was filled beyond capacity.

The bills are a response to the two Congressional commissions of inquiry held two years ago into alleged mismanagement and corruption in Brazilian football. The commissions – one in the Senate and one in the lower house – produced devastating reports after grilling leading figures, among them former FIFA president Joao Havelange, CBF president Ricardo Teixeira, Brazilian striker Ronaldo and former national team coaches Mario Zagallo and Vanderlei Luxemburgo.

The reports accused leading directors of a number of crimes, including tax evasion, and detailed what they said were numerous cases of mismanagement. The Senate report accused Teixeira of living in luxury at the CBF's expense and of donating its money to finance political campaigns, and said the CBF was the victim of a "negligent administration".

The lower house commission heard evidence from a Brazilian teenager who was abandoned in Belgium after his agent failed to find him a club to start his career.

Perhaps one other measure Congress could have taken was to guarantee the physical integrity of Brazil's more talented players. The likes of Diego and Robinho were finding things pretty tough as the new-look Brazilian championship – which for the first time is being played on a conventional league basis – got under way. Diego was fouled at least 10 times as Santos began their defence of the title with a 2-2 draw at home to Parana in a match of extraordinary violence. Parana finished with nine men after committing 43 fouls, including a horrendous tackle from behind by Marquinhos on Diego which the referee punished with a yellow card – a six-month prison sentence would have been more appropriate.

Despite this sterling effort, Parana failed to win the weekend foul count by quite a margin. Guarani gave away 49 free-kicks as they kicked off the tournament – literally – with a 4-2 win over Vasco da Gama. But top of the table were Criciuma, who committed 51 fouls as they beat Fluminense 2-0 and contrived to escape with only five yellow cards.

After five rounds, Cruzeiro were joint top with Atletico Mineiro on 13 points. Cruzeiro, under the ever-unpopular Luxemburgo, remained unbeaten this year in all competitions and are many people's favourites to win the title for the first time. They were particularly impressive in a 4-2 win away to Sao Paulo, where

Oswaldo Oliveira's job is on the line yet again.

Rarely in the history of the game can a coach have survived so long with his head on the block. After every single Sao Paulo defeat since last August, Oliveira's future has been the subject of speculation. He is regarded as one of the gentlemen of the game, but his laid-back style has annoyed the supporters, who believe their club have the strongest squad in the country and should be carrying all before them.

Some commentators believe Oliveira's refusal to bow to the whims of agents and certain club directors has also put him under pressure. The poor man was even jeered as his team were beating Gama 5-1 in the Copa Brasil. He left the touchline two minutes from time in protest, but the entire team turned up at the post-match press conference in a show of support.

While Oliveira clings on grimly, the infamous 'Dance of the Coaches' has already claimed its first victim. Promoted Fortaleza fired Luis Carlos Cruz after six days and one match of the competition, replacing him with Fernandinho Teixeira.

There have already been suggestions the CBF needs to limit the number of times a coach can change jobs during the competition. Last year, when the championship was only five months long, Abel Braga, Helio dos Anjos and Luxemburgo all coached two different teams; there are worries that with an eight-month tournament some coaches could be in charge of three or even four teams.

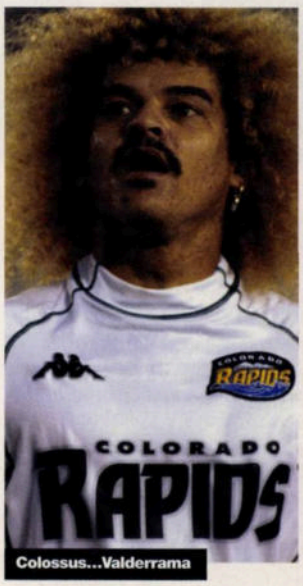
Players have also been jumping from club to club with the tournament under way. The biggest transfer story has been the return of Edmundo – the infamous striker known as the Animal – to Vasco da Gama. In his last stint at the club, Edmundo scored a record-breaking 28 goals as he helped the team win the Carioca (Rio) championship. That was the good news. The downside was that he also spent one night in jail following his part in a fatal car crash in 1995, was sent off seven times in a year, made racial insults at the referee in a game in the north-east and upset animal protection groups by feeding beer to a chimpanzee during a children's party.

Despite all this, and his long-running feud with public favourite Romario two years ago, he was given an archetypal hero's welcome back, descending on to the middle of the pitch in a helicopter to be officially presented to the fans before a match against Goias. Vasco continued the party mood as they won an astonishing game 6-4.

Valderrama valedictory

FORMER Colombia captain Carlos Valderrama, he of the unmistakable shock of yellow hair, has announced the end of his illustrious playing career at 41. His measured, intelligent midfield play earned him a Colombian record 111 caps and made him the ideal man to lead his country at three World Cups – 1990, 1994 and 1998.

Valderrama, born in Santa Marta in 1961, began with home-town Union Magdalena before joining Deportivo Cali, Millonarios, Independiente Medellin and Atletico Junior. His first foreign club was Montpellier in France followed by Spain's Valladolid and Tampa Bay Mutiny, Miami Fusion and, most recently, Colorado Rapids in the US.



Colossus...Valderrama

Valderrama is now a giant of Colombian football in more than name since a seven-metre statue of the player has been erected at the entrance to Santa Marta's Estadio Eduardo Santos. It is thought to be the tallest statue dedicated to a footballer in the world.

Eric Weil

Pro-file Pablo Cavallero

Argentina's bright spot in Korea/ Japan and now secure as No 1

LOOKING for plus points from Argentina's 2002 World Cup campaign may seem perverse. But at least one player crawled from the wreckage with his reputation enhanced.

Goalkeeper Pablo Cavallero went into the tournament with a huge question mark against his name but emerged as the solution for what in recent years has been a problem position for the national team.

The expectation was that the 2002 model would score almost at will. In the event they had territorial domination but little penetration. It could have formed the nightmare scenario for their keeper – little to do but with a lot riding on every save. But Cavallero held his nerve and his concentration. He produced a candidate for save of the tournament to deny Nigeria's Jay-Jay Okocha, and blocked from Paul Scholes and Trevor Sinclair to keep his side in the game against England.

With Argentina's attack managing just two goals in the three group games, nobody could hold Cavallero responsible for the shock first-round elimination. It may not be a fair trade, but if Argentina lost a World Cup, then at least they gained a keeper. And if their last two qualification campaigns were dogged by uncertainty over who should wear the No 1 shirt, there is now no doubt that Cavallero is the man.

It is a prospect that fills him with delight. "With the national team I experience the purity of football," he says. "I enjoy it more than playing for my club [Spain's Celta Vigo]. In the week before international call-ups I can feel my energy level rising. So now the key for me is retaining my international place. And my approach will be the same as when I was the reserve of the reserve – I have to give everything to show I'm worth my place in the team."

With his World Cup displays, plus consistently good form for Celta, Cavallero has finally thrown off the tag of eternally promising youngster. Despite being 29, he has a boyish air, an impression re-enforced by the years spent in the shadow of Paraguayan Jose Luis Chilavert at Velez Sarsfield, and the long battle to get in front of German Burgos and Roberto Bonano in the Argentina pecking order.

Like many of the current national team, Cavallero was a member of the silver medal-winning 1996 Olympic team. But it took him longer than most to make the transition to the senior side. It is hard to believe that he will be 30 next year. He has come of age as an international player, and now hopes for a long reign as Argentina's last line of defence.

Tim Vickery

Fact file

Club Celta Vigo (Spa)
Country Argentina
Born April 13, 1974, in Lomas de Zamora
Previous clubs Velez Sarsfield, Union Santa Fe, Espanyol (Spa)
International debut October 1996, v Venezuela
International caps 12
Honours Olympic silver medal 1996

Velez kids are all right

Eric Weil on a surprise title challenge from the League's youngest side

ARGENTINA

VELEZ SARSFIELD, fielding the youngest team in the League, have shown they are no mere teenage upstarts by mounting a serious challenge for the closing championship. By the halfway stage the club had picked up 22 points from 10 games, three behind the Big Two, River Plate and Boca Juniors.

Velez, whose average age is just 22, have already beaten River 1-0 this season and are also benefiting from their ability to focus solely on the League – unlike the other two, who have both made it through to the knockout stages of the Libertadores Cup.

Velez coach Carlos Ischia was formerly assistant to Carlos Bianchi at Boca during the latter's previous spell in charge, when the club twice won the Libertadores Cup. Bianchi recently paid tribute to his former colleague, saying: "I know Velez are going to finish in the top three in this tournament. They have a lot of dynamism and hunger for glory, and apart from that they have Ischia. They carry his mark and they are going to be a danger for us."

All three sides won their ninth closing campaign game by a single goal, and in all three games a referee's mistake influenced the result. Velez came from behind to beat Union Santa Fe 2-1 at home, but their penalty equaliser, scored by Roberto Nanni, came after an infringement which only the referee appeared to see. In the River Plate-Independiente match, which also finished 2-1, two players almost came to blows, but only the Independiente man was sent off and his team never recovered. Racing Club lost 1-0 at home to Boca Juniors, but were denied a clear penalty.

Racing, who led the closing championship after three games, slipped to fifth place after that defeat and appear to be suffering for their Libertadores efforts. Coach Osvaldo Ardiles is attempting to field his strongest side in both domestic and continental games, unlike River and Boca. However, like the Big Two, Racing also qualified for the Libertadores second round.

Huracan, once among the biggest clubs in the country, are unlikely to escape relegation. They conspired to throw away a two-goal lead against Talleres Cordoba in their ninth-round game, losing 4-2. Not for the first time, Huracan fans clamoured for the committee's resignation, with one set of supporters launching a lawsuit against the officials. The club are heavily in debt and have nothing to show for all the money apparently spent.

Cashing in...Nanni's equaliser from a dubious penalty began Velez's comeback against Union

S American round-up

Colombians – keep your shirts on

COLOMBIAN League players are to be fined around £400 for taking their shirts off during goal celebrations following complaints from sponsors. They claim such behaviour reduces the impact of their logos because post-goal moments are when TV cameras give some of the best close-ups of players' shirts.

Atletico Bucaramanga's nine-game unbeaten run in the closing championship came to an abrupt end when they were beaten 4-0 by bottom side Independiente Medellin.

CHILE: Santiago mayor Pedro Sabat wants to pull down the city's centrally-situated national stadium to make way for new housing and put an end to the frequent violence stemming from derby games at the arena in a heavily-populated area of the capital. Sabat claims the 60-year-old stadium has structural faults that would make it dangerous during the frequent earth tremors in Santiago. It was a venue during the 1962 World Cup and became a detention and torture centre during the military government.

PARAGUAY: Uruguayan Anibal Ruiz, former coach of top side Olimpia, has been named national team coach. The latest appointee at Ruiz's old club is Alicio Solalinde. He succeeds Argentinian Nery Pumpido, who led Olimpia to win the Libertadores Cup last season but has had poor results of late. Another Argentinian, Gustavo Costas, has left Guarani, with Felix Diaz taking over as caretaker.

Gerardo Martino, a compatriot of Pumpido and Costas, is enjoying better fortunes. His Libertad side, last year's champions, held a four-point lead in the opening championship.

URUGUAY: Former international Juan Ramon Carrasco has been appointed national coach. Carrasco came to prominence after coaching modest Fenix to a place in this year's Libertadores Cup. Hugo De Leon, another former international and ex-boss of leading club Nacional, had been a favourite to take the post but was ruled out because he still does not have a coaching certificate.

Carrasco, capped 20 times, played for no fewer than 14 clubs, and was still turning out for Nacional at 41.

Nacional, the defending champions, were the only unbeaten team in the opening championship after seven games and held a four-point lead. Their run was extended by a 1-0 win over lowly Liverpool, with Sebastian Abreu scoring on his return to the club. The international forward recently quit Mexicans Cruz Azul after the players walked out in dispute with coach Mario Carillo.

Ruiz scores; Stoichkov let off

Paul Gardner on a predictable and disturbing start to the season

UNITED STATES

JUST a couple of weeks into the MLS season, and already the predictions are flying. Los Angeles Galaxy to retain the championship? Oh no, Kansas City Wizards have to be the favourites. How can you rule out New England Revolution, with their virtually unchanged starting XI? And so on.

One thing seems certain, though, Carlos Ruiz, last year's scoring sensation for Galaxy, is taking up where he left off. Last season's final goal was his – it won the championship for his team. In the new season, Galaxy drew their first two games 1-1, and Ruiz scored both their goals, with remarkable individual efforts.

One early prediction has been made with a great deal of confidence. After the first week of the season, Essie Baharmast, the US federation's director of officials, remarked: "Have you noticed – the dissent? It's gone. Completely." A new zero-tolerance policy towards this behaviour has, apparently, been put in place by MLS. 'Apparently', because no public announcement has been made.

Baharmast's claim is, no doubt, an exaggeration, but things did seem a bit quieter in that opening week. A healthy scepticism remains the correct attitude, though. The history of soccer 'clampdowns' shows an initial period of stern application followed by a slow, quiet drift back to the status quo. The hope is that referees – who have taken far too much abuse in past seasons – will stick to their task and rid MLS of a blight that has made a mockery of the marketing idea that soccer is 'the family sport'.

Sadly, that image took an awful knock just before the season started. In a 'friendly' between DC United and American University, Hristo Stoichkov – the most experienced player in MLS – managed to inflict a compound fracture of the leg of 18-year-old AU player Freddy Llerena. The ex-Bulgaria forward was sent off, and the extent of the injury so appalled the other players that the game was abandoned barely 10 minutes in.

MLS investigated the matter for over two weeks before its disciplinary committee published a long, self-contradictory statement exonerating Stoichkov of virtually all blame – then handed out the derisory punishment of a two-game suspension and a £1,300 fine.

The report makes depressing and, ultimately, unbelievable reading.

Back in the old routine...Ruiz gets the hugs after scoring for Galaxy

Nevertheless, there is a cogent reason behind its flagrant pro-Stoichkov bias – the threat of legal action. Llerena's father is known to have consulted a lawyer, while the player declined to speak to the disciplinary committee, no doubt following legal advice.

Stoichkov's position is unique in that he is both a player and an assistant coach at DC United. As a player, his employer is MLS since, under the centralised system, it signs all the player contracts; as a coach he is employed by DC United. This would seem to make both League and club liable in any action.

There is also the unquestionable fact that, as a coach, Stoichkov must be held to higher levels of responsibility than a player. But this is simply ignored by the MLS report.

The Bulgarian's coaching career can hardly be said to be off to a flying start. His other contribution to the DC United cause was to facilitate the arrival of compatriot Galin Ivanov – "just the hairy-chested Bulgarian I've always wanted," chortled coach Ray Hudson. Ivanov managed to get himself sent off in another pre-season game and has since been sidelined for a month by a hernia.

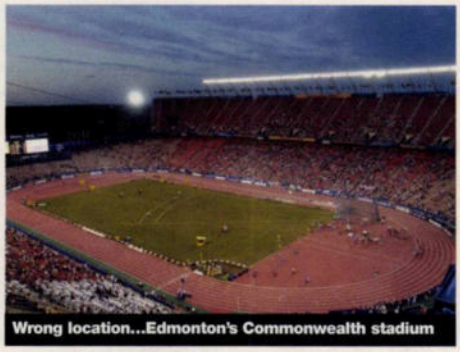
CANADA

Canadians eye MLS link-up

THE GRASS always looks greener on the other side, and this might be why the Canadian Soccer Association (CSA) is pushing for the construction of a soccer-only venue in the nation's largest city, Toronto, in order to attract interest in time for the US-based Major League Soccer's expansion plans.

Unable to generate interest in the Canadian business community to create a viable national league of their own, the soccer authorities are looking south of the border for help. There are four professional Canadian clubs in the American second division A-League (Montreal, Toronto, Calgary and Vancouver) but none in the top-flight MLS.

Only the Commonwealth stadium in Edmonton, Alberta, meets MLS regulations. But while it has a capacity of 57,800, it is located in what is considered a small market in North American terms. Football


Wrong location...Edmonton's Commonwealth stadium

has filled the stadium only twice – a friendly against Brazil in the early 1990s and last summer for the FIFA Under-19 Women's World Championship Final between Canada and the United States.

Montreal's Olympic stadium attracted 71,000 for the 1976 Olympic Final between East Germany and Poland but its seating has been redesigned for baseball and the artificial surface makes it hard for football to be played there at present. "An MLS franchise in Toronto would allow the top 20 to 30 Canadian players an option of playing at the highest professional level in North America in front of a home crowd," says CSA president Andy Sharpe. "It would also provide a regular tenant to a soccer-specific stadium which could act as a future site for internationals, tournaments and championships."

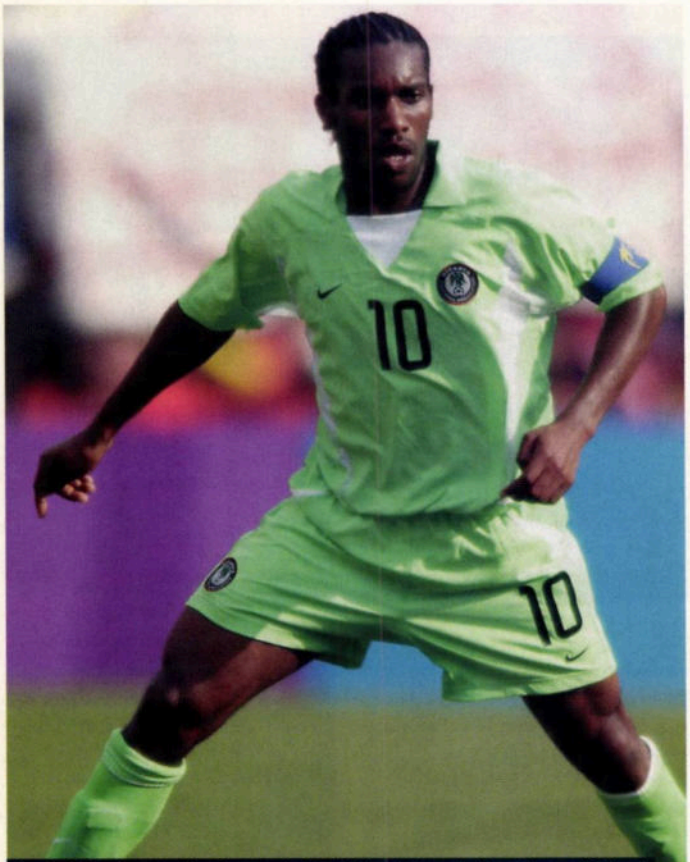
The CSA attempted a similar move in the defunct North American Soccer League back in the 1980s and regrouped the best Canadian players in the Montreal franchise. A few years later, Canada were at the World Cup finals for the first time but have not returned since. The CSA plans a Toronto-based franchise to join MLS for the 2006 season, with the hoped-for long-term benefit a place at the 2010 World Cup finals.

The 30,000-seat Toronto stadium is also the centrepiece of the Canadian bid for the 2007 FIFA Women's World Cup, but without the assurance of an MLS franchise, the idea could go down the drain.

Philippe Germain

Jay-Jay flies for Super Eagles

Okocha steers Nigeria to brink of Nations Cup finals. Mark Gleeson reports



Lord of the dance...Okocha was in inspirational form in the win over Malawi

AFRICAN NATIONS CUP

NIGERIA'S 1-0 Group 1 win over Malawi in Blantyre, thanks to an early goal from John Utaka, means they effectively need just to win their next home game, against the same opponents in June, to make sure of qualification for next January's African Nations Cup finals. The Super Eagles were inspired by captain Jay-Jay Okocha and won in the absence of Nwankwo Kanu and Celestine Babayaro, who have been dropped since they are considered prima donnas.

Two goals from Robert Mambo helped Kenya to a 4-0 win against Mauritania in Group 5, maintaining their 100 per cent record after three games. "The pressure is really on us now," admitted captain Musa Otieno. "Everyone says we are going to qualify and that is making it harder for the players." Elsewhere in the group, Cape Verde Islands were surprise 2-1 winners over Togo, who played at the last three Nations Cup finals.

Zimbabwe also have three wins out of three having beaten the Seychelles 3-1 in Harare in Group 6. The Ndlovu brothers, Adam and Peter, shared the goals, though they would have hoped for a bigger winning margin.

Zambia won a second away game and have seven points out of a possible nine in Group 3. Their latest success came in Dar-es-Salaam, where they beat Tanzania 1-0 with a first-half header from Misheck Lungu. But Benin, who surprisingly held Zambia to a 1-1 draw away in October, came back down to earth with a 3-0 hiding in Sudan.

World Cup finalists Senegal were held to a goalless draw in the West Africa derby with Gambia, who look to be throwing away their minnows tag. But Senegal have the advantage of a home game to come in Dakar in early June and should still win Group 8.

In Group 11, Ivory Coast recorded a vital 1-0 win in Burundi with a goal from France-born Dagui Bakari, who spent years turning down invitations to play for the Elephants. The result puts pressure on South Africa, the group's other side. Only the top team from the three-country groups qualify for the finals.

Senegal clean up

AS EXPECTED, Senegal were the big winners at the African soccer awards in Johannesburg on April 1, cashing in on their World Cup success of 2002. Liverpool striker El Hadji Diouf was named African Footballer of the Year for a second successive time, Senegal were named Team of the Year, Tony Sylva won Goalkeeper of the Year and Bruno Metsu best coach for the second year running. "It was a super night," said Frenchman Metsu, now in charge of United Arab Emirates side Al Ain. "It gave us all a lot of pleasure and was reward for all our hard work."

Top again...Diouf

THE WINNERS

Footballer of the Year:
El Hadji Diouf (Liverpool & Senegal)
Young Player of the Year:
Ahmed Hossam (Ajax Amsterdam & Egypt)
Goalkeeper of the Year:
Tony Sylva (Senegal)
Coach of the Year:
Bruno Metsu (Senegal)
Club of the Year:
Zamalek (Egypt)
Team of the Year:
Senegal
African Champions League Best Player:
Hicham Aboucherouane (Raja Casablanca)

Round-up

Desailly eyes Ghana job

MARCEL DESAILLY has said he wants to coach his native **GHANA** when he retires at the end of his playing career at Chelsea in England. The France defender was born in Accra and is a regular visitor to the country.

Elsewhere in **WEST AFRICA**, former Portuguese international Oscar Duarte quit as coach of the **CAPE VERDE ISLANDS** despite the 2-1 win over Togo on March 29 which kept them in the hunt for their first place at the finals tournament. He blamed frequent clashes with federation officials for his departure.

BENIN side JS Pobe have been disqualified from this year's African Cup-winners Cup and banned from CAF competitions for three years after failing to turn up for their first round, first leg match away to Tunisia's Etoile Sahel.

CENTRAL AFRICA

Lens goalkeeper Charles Itandje has chosen to play for France's Under-21 side rather than **CAMEROON**, despite having previously been called up by the Indomitable Lions.

EAST AFRICA

KENYA have been banned from entering teams into age-group competitions for two years after being found guilty of using overage players in the recent African Under-17 Championship qualifiers. Meanwhile, the country has announced its candidacy to host the 2008 African Nations Cup.

NORTH AFRICA

TUNISIA headed a list of 12 countries who will be allowed to enter a second team in the African Champions League, which is to be expanded to 64 teams from next year. CAF decided on the list based on club performances in CAF competitions over the past five years.

LIBYA'S Al Ittihad, run by Saadi Gaddafi, son of the country's President, paid £200,000 to play a friendly against Barcelona as they prepared for their African Champions League tie against Hassania Agadir of Morocco. The Libyans lost 5-0 at Camp Nou, with Gaddafi, a former Libyan FA president, playing for the last 12 minutes.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

FORMER **ANGOLA** coach Dusan Kondic has taken over at Primeiro Agosto for the second time. The Serb replaces Jaime Chimalanga, fired after three straight League defeats. Kondic led Primeiro to the 1991 and 1992 League titles.

Former **ZIMBABWEAN** international Joseph Machingura has died aged 39 in Bulawayo.

Mark Gleeson

Changing of the old guard

Mark Gleeson on coach Mashaba's radical national team overhaul

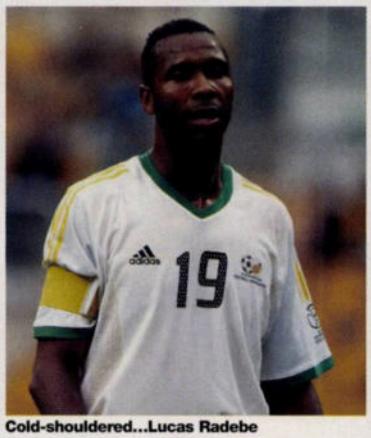
UNLESS there is a major climb down by officials, South Africa will go into their friendly against England on May 22 without four of their key players, shunned by the FA for alleged indifference and indiscipline.

World Cup captain Lucas Radebe has been cold-shouldered since last year's tournament because of his reluctance to return for international duty; Shaun Bartlett and Mark Fish of Charlton, who have also captained the national side, because they did not attend a training camp in February; and striker Benni McCarthy, who last year refused to sign a commercial contract.

Facing England without this quartet could be viewed as tantamount to a shot in the foot, but coach Ephraim Mashaba is determined to go on without their vital experience and talent. Added to the country's woes is the long-term injury to Siyabonga Nomvete, who hurt his knee in pre-season training at Udinese. As a result, the coach has turned to a new generation of players as the country attempt to qualify for the African Nations Cup finals in Tunisia next year.

Mashaba has an unbeaten record since taking over after the World Cup but has not distinguished himself with his choice of new caps – many of them first played under him when he was Under-23s coach but have long since lost their rising-star status.

Mashaba had envisaged using mostly players from the domestic League but realised quickly that his future employment rested on results that could only be achieved by drawing heavily on South Africa's Europe-based players. Key is the FC Copenhagen winger Sibusiso Zuma, who has not yet reproduced club form at international level, and Delron Buckley, a left winger with German side Bochum whose form vacillates between world-beater and downright poor.



Cold-shouldered...Lucas Radebe

Defender Jacob Lekgetho has made a good impression in the UEFA Champions League with Lokomotiv Moscow, while Mbulelo Mabizela of Orlando Pirates is the best home-based talent.

South Africa have yet to exploit the talent of Ajax Amsterdam midfielder Steven Pienaar. He only recently won his second cap, almost a year after his first.

THE SQUAD

THE COACH

Ephraim MASHABA
Born 06.08.50
A player with Moroka Swallows and Orlando Pirates who would surely have been an international if not for apartheid. Did not have an impressive record as a club coach before he took over the South African Under-23s. But he took them to the 2000 Olympics, where they beat Brazil in a group game.

GOALKEEPERS

Andre ARENDSE (Santos)
27.06.67. 60 caps. Footballer of the Year in South Africa last term as Santos won the League, but then bombed at the World Cup. Dropped from the South Africa squad for the first time in years in March.

Brian BALOYI (Kaizer Chiefs)
16.03.74. 18 caps. Took over as captain from Arendse for the Madagascar match in March, winning his first cap in two years.

Inconsistent...Delron Buckley

Emile BARON (Lillestrom, Nor)
17.06.77. 1 cap. Played at the last Olympics but has a reputation for indiscipline.

DEFENDERS

Matthew BOOTH (Rostov, Rus)
14.03.77. 14 caps (1 goal). Former trialist at Wimbledon now playing a second season in Russia. Missed out on the World Cup after being injured in a warm-up tournament in Hong Kong.

Jacob LEKGETHO (Lokomotiv Moscow, Rus)
24.03.74. 19 caps. Caught the eye of several Serie A clubs after his UEFA Champions League performances but his late blossoming might have counted against a move westwards.

Mbulelo MABIZELA (Orlando Pirates)
16.09.80. 15 caps. Made his international debut after just nine League matches in 2001 and went on to play in the 2002 African Nations Cup finals.

Aaron MOKOENA (Germinal Beerschot, Blg)
25.11.80. 29 caps. South Africa's youngest ever international when he made his debut in 1999. On loan from Ajax Amsterdam.

Cyril NZAMA (Kaizer Chiefs)
26.06.74. 30 caps. Played at right-back during the World Cup but turned down a move to Greece's Aris Salonika afterwards. Strong in the air and likes to overlap.

MIDFIELDERS

Delron BUCKLEY (Bochum, Ger)
07.12.77. 37 caps (7 goals). Ex-Bayer Leverkusen boss Klaus Toppmoller once described Buckley as the new Maradona but he only looks like living up to the tag once a month.

Quinton FORTUNE (Manchester United, Eng)
21.05.77. 43 caps (1 goal). Injury has kept him from the international arena since last year's World Cup.

Bennett MNGUNI (Lokomotiv Moscow, Rus)
16.12.73. 10 caps. A World Cup squad member and scorer against Real Madrid in the UEFA Champions League this season. Made his professional debut with Mamelodi Sundowns aged 27.

Tebeho MOKOENA (Jomo Cosmos)
10.07.74. 18 caps (4 goals). Formerly with St Gallen of Switzerland and ever-present at last year's World Cup but has yet to prove his competence.

Steven PIENAAR (Ajax Amsterdam, Hol)
17.03.82. 2 caps. Graduated from South Africa's School of Excellence. Has been largely ignored over the past year despite his rapid rise in profile in European soccer.

MacBeth SIBAYA (Rubin Kazan, Rus)
25.11.77. 16 caps. Tough tackler and strong presence in midfield but needs to improve his passing ability. Won the Norwegian League with Rosenborg last season.

Benedict VILAKAZI (Orlando Pirates)
09.08.82. 8 caps (1 goal). Precocious talent whose diminutive stature is the only thing that stands in his way.

Sibusiso ZUMA (FC Copenhagen, Den)
23.06.75. 30 caps (3 goals). Pacy right winger who has bags of skill but needs to improve his consistency. Former Danish League Player of the Year.

Japhet ZWANE (Rostov, Rus)
10.01.74. 5 caps. Late-developing left-sided player who recently moved to Russia from title-chasing Moroka Swallows.

FORWARDS

George KOUMANTARAKIS (Preston, Eng)
27.03.74. 11 caps (1 goal). Gangly striker profiting from the absence of Benni McCarthy and injury to Siyabonga Nomvete. Won Swiss title with Basle last season.

Bag of tricks...Sibusiso Zuma

Lesley MANYATHELA (Orlando Pirates)
04.09.81. 6 caps (1 goal). Top scorer in the domestic top flight this season – his potential is due to be soon spotted by a European club.

Nkosinathi NHLEKO (Brann, Nor)
24.07.79. 6 caps (1 goal). Graduated from the Under-23s but has not yet set the international arena alight. Was also unconvincing in the domestic League before moving to Norway.

BEC Tero in dark over Final opponents

The SARS virus has put the Dalian-Al Ain semi on hold, writes Michael Church

ASIAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

BEC Tero Sasana became the first team to reach the Final of the inaugural Asian Champions League. But, at press time, the Thailand champions were in the dark over who they would face in May's Final. The second leg of the other semi, between hosts Dalian Shide of China and United Arab Emirates champions Al Ain, was postponed indefinitely due to the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) that has swept east Asia.

Al Ain led 4-2 after the home first leg but then asked the Asian Football Confederation to consider holding the second leg at a neutral venue due to health fears. Instead, the AFC postponed the game.

BEC Tero beat Uzbekistan's Pakhtakor 3-2 on aggregate to become the first Thai team to make the Final of Asia's premier club competition since Thai Farmers Bank won the Asian Club Championship back in 1994. The Bangkok side won the home first leg 3-1, with Worawoot Srimaka and Khwanchai Phuangprakob giving them a 2-0 lead. Anvarjon Soliev pulled one back before Therdsak Chaiman restored BEC's two-goal cushion six minutes from time.

Therdsak's goal was to prove vital as Pakhtakor edged the second leg in Tashkent 1-0. Server Djeperov scored with four minutes to go, but it wasn't enough.

"We gave away many free-kicks around the box, which of course was dangerous," said victorious coach Attapol Puspakom. "Pakhtakor played very, very well, but we knew we would be doing a lot of defending."

The £2 million tournament was not the only event to be hit by the SARS alert. Five matches in Asia's Olympic qualifying tournament were also put on hold, as was the draw for the Women's World Cup and the Asia Women's Championship. Everton cancelled their tour of China while Portugal pulled out of friendlies with Japan and South Korea.

Crucial strike...BEC Tero's Therdsak Chaiman

CHINA

Distracted Dalian lose ground

DEFENDING champions Dalian Shide have had an indifferent start to the season, taking eight points from the first five League games as they struggled to overcome the distraction of involvement in the latter stages of the Asian Champions League.

They lay four points behind joint leaders Yunan Hongta and Shanghai Zhongyuan, the latter, promoted only last season, now eclipsing former champions Shanghai Shenhua as the city's leading club.

Beijing Hyundai's defeat by Zhongyuan – their third straight loss – led to the departure of Brazilian coach Jose Carlos de Oliveira. His replacement is Yugoslav Ljupko Petrovic, who took the club to second in the League last season but left citing family problems. "Oliveira said he had not lived up to the expectations of the club and fans," said Wei Kexing, who took over as caretaker before Petrovic's reappointment.

Four defeats in five games led to the firing of Dimitar Penev by Beijing Sanyuan, formerly Liaoning Bird. The Bulgarian's replacement is Ma Lin.

Michael Church

Round-up

Songnam's high five

ASIA

DEFENDING **SOUTH KOREAN** champions Songnam Ilhwa won their first five games of the season to go five points clear at the top and some way to helping them put their Asian Champions League disappointments behind them. Songnam crashed out in the group stages of the continental competition.

World Cup midfielder Lee Young-pyo has made his move to PSV Eindhoven permanent having been there on loan from Anyang Cheetahs since January. Anyang will receive £1.3million for the 26-year-old.

Sepahan continue to lead the **IRANIAN** League, seven points clear of Tehran's Pirouzi. The Olympic side went through to the second round of qualifiers for the 2004 finals after Maldives declined to travel to Tehran because of security concerns.

East Bengal beat lowly Indian Bank 3-0 in the **INDIAN** National League to take an almost impregnable lead with two games to play.

The **MALAYSIAN** FA is to revamp its league structure, creating an eight-team Super League above an 18-team Premier League.

Frenchman Fernandez Dominique, a former player with Le Havre and Lens, has been named manager of **LAOS**.

Michael Church & Azam Mahmood

OCEANIA

PERTH GLORY took a big step towards their third **AUSTRALIAN** National Soccer League Grand Final in four years when winning 2-1 at defending champions Sydney Olympic.

The victory put Glory three points clear of their arch-rivals at the top of the six-team championship play-off section after four games. The top two at the end of the 10-game series qualify for the Grand Final, the championship decider.

Damian Mori scored after just 15 seconds and Glory held their lead until Ante Milicic scored from a penalty early in the second half. However, substitute Mick Mrdja hit the winner three minutes from time.

Flying start...Damian Mori

Struggling Dunedin Technical caused the shock of the season to date in **NEW ZEALAND** with a 5-3 win at leaders Central United.

Manu Ura joined long-time pacesetters Pirae at the top of the League in **TAHITI**. Both had 22 points, with Pirae, last year's runners-up, remaining top by virtue of a better goal difference and had two games in hand.

The national Olympic selection headed the table in **FIJI** for the first time since being admitted to the League five years ago. The Olympians moved to the top after beating early-season leaders Nadi 1-0 in a game which was held up for 20 minutes while officials spread sand over waterlogged areas of the pitch.

Naha defeated Marist 3-2 in the **SOLOMON ISLANDS'** Invitation League Grand Final.

Paul Moon

Zico faces race against time

JAPAN

ZICO'S new-look Japan national team earned a respectable 2-2 draw at home to Uruguay at the end of March. But pundits are asking whether the Asian champions can possibly be ready in time for the Confederations Cup in France in June.

Although this was the Brazilian coach's third game in charge, following friendlies against Jamaica and Argentina last year, it was the first time he had had a significant period with his squad.

Japan's slow restart after the World Cup has not been helped by events outside Zico's control. He had to miss the Argentina match for family reasons and then a tour of the United States in March was cancelled because of the war in Iraq. Portugal have now pulled out of a June friendly on account of the SARS virus.

With so much against him, Zico will be hard pushed to get the team ready for the Confederations Cup, in which Japan are grouped with France, New Zealand and Colombia.

The Brazilian called up seven Europe-based players for the Uruguay game, and the result of four days' training was a reasonably balanced team effort with a lot of possession and noticeably better defending than in the first two outings.

Even so, the gaps still showed, as Manchester United striker Diego Forlan put Uruguay ahead with a magnificent but free header in the 21st minute. Then, almost as soon as Shunsuke Nakamura of Reggina equalised two minutes later from the penalty spot, Portsmouth's reserve keeper Yoshikatsu Kawaguchi, in his first international since May last year, fumbled a corner to let Alejandro Lembo put Uruguay back in front. A powerful drive by Fulham's Junichi Inamoto brought Japan's second equaliser in the 57th minute.

Zico has rejected the three-man defence used by predecessor Philippe Troussier in favour of a less regulated 4-4-2. However, he has kept most of the same players, specifically ruling out selecting Under-23 team players aiming to qualify for the Olympics.

The J.League was left twiddling its thumbs by the US tour that never was, having scheduled a two-week break to accommodate it. When play resumed, much attention was turned to champions Jubilo Iwata, who had lost the season-opening League game 4-2 at home to Yokohama F Marinos. Jubilo had to wait until their third match for their first win, 1-0 against struggling Urawa Reds.

Urawa have had a nightmare start, with Brazilian signing Edmundo, released by Tokyo Verdy at the end of last season, having walked out and returned home to join Vasco da Gama. Kashiwa Reysol's Brazilian World Cup forward Edilson also refused to return for the new season.

Mike Plastow & Yumiko Nagae

In control...Shunsuke Nakamura shields the ball from Uruguay's Diego Forlan

Pro-file Naohiro Takahara

'Sushi Bomber' taking off in style at Hamburg

NEVER mind Naohiro Takahara's embarrassingly botched finish against Arminia Bielefeld which could qualify for miss of the season. Hamburg's new Japanese striker has made the Bundesliga grade following his mid-season free-transfer move from J.League champions Jubilo Iwata.

Takahara, Japan's 2002 Player of the Year and League top scorer, has very much looked the part during his first dozen appearances for Hamburg, always bristling with endeavour and making life complicated for defenders with his clever movement off the ball, strong running and aerial ability.

It was with a headed goal in a League game at Bayern Munich in February he first announced himself to a German audience. With his team 1-0 down deep into injury time, the Sushi Bomber – as German headline writers were to dub him – glanced home Mehdi Mahdavikia's cross to earn his side a point and end Bayern keeper Oliver Kahn's record of 803 minutes without conceding a goal.

It is true Hamburg had one eye on the commercial possibilities when signing Takahara; they aim to sell huge quantities of club merchandise in Japan and admit the forward could be "a door-opener" in terms of attracting Asian sponsors. Yet Takahara has shown he is not there just to sell shirts in his homeland.

"He's quick, strong and has a good touch. He has done lots of good things on the pitch and his attitude is a healthy one," says Hamburg coach Kurt Jara. "It's very reassuring to have someone of his quality. He's adapting quickly to German football, but we know much of his potential has not yet been exploited."

Takahara's promising start contrasts markedly with his experience at Boca Juniors in 2001. He played just six games for the Buenos Aires club, scoring once, before being returned to Jubilo after six months. "It was still a priceless experience," insists Takahara. "Above all, I learnt how to cope with tough, uncompromising defenders. If I hadn't gone to Argentina, I would have undoubtedly found it harder in Germany. I feel good at Hamburg. There's a family atmosphere here, all the squad get on well. We are having a very good season and qualification for a European competition is within our grasp."

Takahara also wants to re-establish himself at international level. He boasts a decent strike rate of nine goals in 19 games for Japan and would surely have featured at the World Cup had he not been hit by pneumonia. With his Hamburg form in mind, new Japan boss Zico will be unable to ignore him.

Nick Bidwell

Fact file

Club Hamburg (Ger)
Country Japan
Born June 4, 1979, in Shizuoka
Previous clubs Tokai University, Jubilo Iwata, Boca Juniors (Arg)
International caps 19 (9 goals)
Honours Asian Cup 2000; Asian Champions Cup 1999, 2000; Japanese League 1999, 2002

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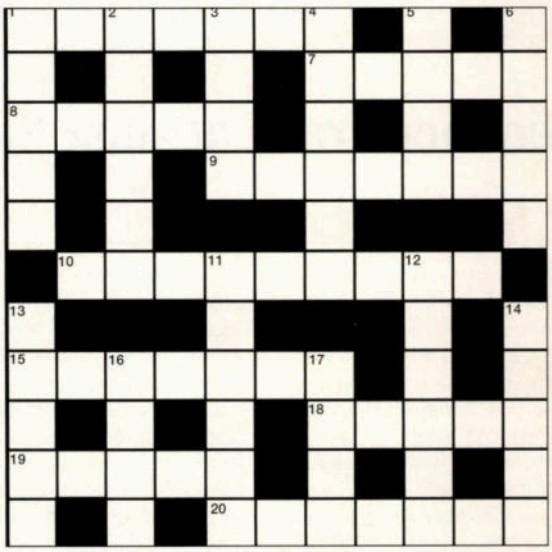

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ACROSS

1 Ex-Inter defender loaned by Lecce to Reggina in 2003 (7)
7 Home town of Dutch club NAC (5)
8 Cameroon striker who has played for Nantes, Sheffield Utd and Numancia (5)
9 Halmstads midfielder given his Sweden debut last November (7)
10 Ex-Moscow Spartak, Roma and Perugia Russian with FC Porto (9)
15 Spanish international midfielder at Real Sociedad (2,5)
18 AEK Athens' Dutch midfielder recruited last year from Vitesse Arnhem (5)
19 Tulsa-born US striker who joined Everton from New England Revolution (5)
20 San Jose Earthquakes and USA star once with Bayer Leverkusen (7)

DOWN

1 France striker at Auxerre (5)
2 Hertha Berlin's young Angolan forward picked up from Ajax in 2002 (6)
3 2002 French champions (4)
4 Belgrade club, 1998 champions of Yugoslavia (6)
5 German who replaced Bathenay as Seychelles coach (4)
6 Argentinian midfielder who joined Boca Juniors from Villarreal (5)
11 Czech midfield star of Juventus (6)
12 Lokomotiv Moscow defender in the Russian national squad (6)
13 66-cap England defender – Vieira's predecessor as Arsenal skipper (5)
14 Influential midfielder of Basle and Switzerland (5)
16 England-based Estonian goalkeeper (4)
17 Emre's Turkish midfield colleague at Internazionale (4)

APRIL SOLUTION

Across: 1 Stoica, 3 Zane, 7 Rushfeldt, 9 Ivic, 10 Cernat, 12 Makaay, 13 Coco, 16 Ventspils, 17 Zico, 18 Larsen.
Down: 1 Sergi, 2 Cafu, 4 Antonioli, 5 Ernst, 6 Illes, 8 Sliskovic, 11 Nanni, 12 Munoz, 14 Olsen, 15 Issa.

APRIL WINNERS

1st prize: Rishi Vaghela, London.
5 runners-up: Ahmed A Hashili, Sanad, Bahrain; Walter Rossen, Deurne, Belgium; Julio Bovi Diogo, Santos, Brazil; Hani Alhmed Al-Qadhi, Montreal; Alvin Betson, Tullamore, Rep of Ireland.

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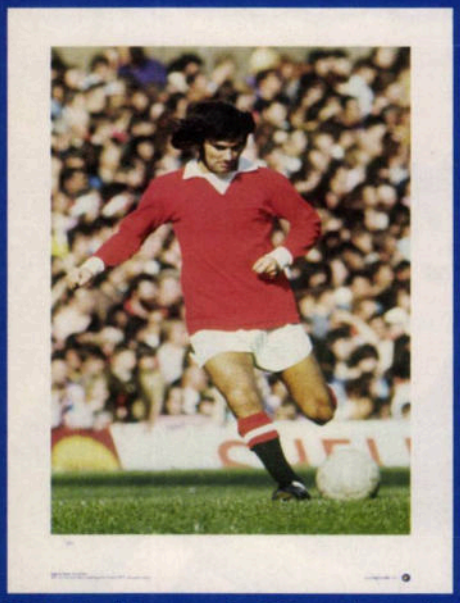

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Brian Glanville's LAST WORD

Thank goodness for Rooney

REJOICE for Wayne Rooney. And acknowledge, please, that without him, his precocious confidence, power, skill and tactical flair, England would never have beaten Turkey at Sunderland.

Forget about the midfield diamond. Tactics alone would hardly have been enough to give England a victory that seemed so unlikely until the second half. There has been much praise for the performance of Nicky Butt, but he, like his Manchester United and England predecessor Nobby Stiles, is essentially an enforcer rather than a creator, valuable in his own way but basically supporting cast.

The midfield selection meant that England had no naturally left-sided player. This time Steven Gerrard played there, often moving off the flank into the middle. But well though he performed, it meant he was both on his wrong foot and could not keep giving Michael Owen the long, searching balls through the middle on which the striker thrives when they play for Liverpool.

The remarkable thing was that Rooney, at just 17, was really the brains of the outfit, the player ready to drop back into midfield, get hold of the ball, even juggle it past opponents, then hit the kind of pass, not least crossfield, of which any playmaker would be proud. But until his confidence oozed through, England had looked an uneasy team, finding it hard to contain the technically superior Turks.

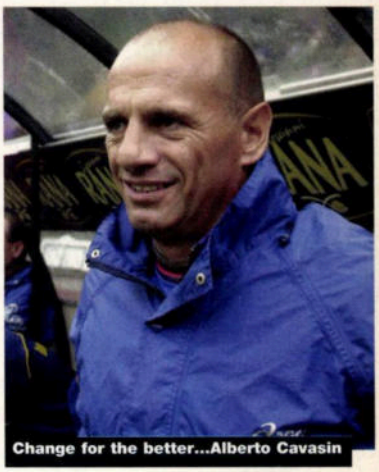
Thank goodness Sven Goran Eriksson eventually overcame his initial reluctance and played Rooney from the start, no matter the cautious warblings of the teenager's manager at Everton, David Moyes.

After Rooney had played havoc with Arsenal's defence at Highbury in a recent League match, scoring a fine goal and exploiting the Gunners' weakness on the left, Moyes insisted he still had a lot to learn. Well, Rooney also has a hell of a lot to teach, things that many a seasoned footballer will never learn at all.

And as for that ever-troublesome England left flank? Why does Eriksson ignore Aston Villa's Gareth Barry, now fulfilling all the promise he showed as a teenager, thoroughly versatile, a solid defender, happy to go forward down the flank. Hard to think of a stronger candidate.

'He may have a lot to learn but he also has a hell of a lot to teach, things that many a seasoned footballer will never learn at all'

Taking a grip...Rooney posed problems for the Turkish defence on his first England start



Change for the better...Alberto Cavasin

Reborn Fiorentina hit purple patch

WHAT ups and downs there have been at poor besieged Fiorentina, though now the motion seems up rather than down. Up, that is to say, from the humiliating depths of Serie C2, where the club, bankrupted by the arrogant ineptitude of ex-president Vittorio Cecchi Gori, plunged at the end of last season, obliged now to change their name to Florentia.

When I was in Florence last August, they had just been taken over by Diego Della Valle, a wealthy shoe manufacturer never before connected with football, while the nearly 37-year-old Angelo Di Livio, an Italy player in the recent World Cup, had generously decided to stay. The new manager was Pietro Vierchowod, a famously hard defender in his day and capped 42 times by Italy.

Crowds were already loyal and vast. But Vierchowod lasted only until October and a 2-0 defeat by fellow Tuscans Grosseto. Out he went, indicating that short though Della Valle might have been of footballing experience, it hadn't taken long for him to learn how Italian club presidents behave.

But the appointment of the likeable, dedicated Alberto Cavasin as Vierchowod's successor worked from the beginning. Boldly, he brought in no fewer than 14 new players. Even when the still excellent and influential Di Livio dropped out in January with injured knee ligaments, the team continued to flourish. Florentia were top of their C2 group by early April, with Christian Rigano, the club's tall new 28-year-old centre-forward, signed from Taranto, already with 25 goals.

But although promotion looks likely at the end of the season, it is a weary way back to Serie A, where the *viola* surely belong.

Missing – the making of Finney

TOM FINNEY, that glorious talent, that supreme sportsman, one of the finest players of his day, has brought out *My Autobiography* (Headline). It is not his first, is much belated but welcome all the same, yet contains an astonishing omission.

How could he and/or his ghost writer have failed even to mention the game that put him on the map? The Final at Wembley in 1941 of the League War Cup, an ersatz competition which for a couple of seasons replaced the suspended FA Cup.

Preston North End, Finney's one and only club, were pitted against the famous, formidable and clear favourites Arsenal. Finney was a 19-year-old unknown right winger going into the game, but he would be well enough known after it, having tied the Gunners in knots.

The match ended in a draw and Preston won the replay, played at Blackburn. From that moment, Finney was hailed as a future star. Serving in the Middle East, he won the admiration of another outside-right who had once excelled at Wembley: Alex Jackson, scorer of three goals for Scotland's Wembley Wizards in their 5-1 thrashing of England in 1928 when at 5ft 7in he was the tallest man in the Scots' attack. Finney, thank goodness, returned from the war, almost immediately, if temporarily, to oust Stanley Matthews from his position on England's right wing.

That situation prevailed until May 1947 when in Lisbon the selectors had the sense to put the naturally left-footed Finney on the left flank, Matthews on the right. The consequence was a 10-0 demolition of Portugal. A year later England beat Italy 4-0 in Turin and Finney scored twice.

His perfect balance, fine strategic sense, pace, clever feet and deceptive swerve made him formidable, and when, at the tail-end of his career, Preston used him as a deep-lying centre-forward he was just as effective and inspired.

Finney, never booked in his career and loyal throughout its many years to Preston – although Palermo and their raffish president, Prince Roberto Lanza Di Trabia, tried hard to sign him in 1947 – went on to establish his own plumbing business in his home town, rising from severe poverty. I hope his book does well, but there's a great big hole in the middle.

Marked for greatness...Finney graced an England shirt for years

Fergie failings still to the fore

Open to question...have United succeeded because of Ferguson or despite him?

ALEX FERGUSON, for all Manchester United's success, has been making strange mistakes for a long time, so much so that you sometimes wonder whether the club's success has been despite him rather than because of him. Look back above all to that Champions League Final against Bayern Munich when his strange selection – Ryan Giggs on the right, Jesper Blomqvist on the left – nearly brought disaster, only for the substitutes to save the day in the final minutes.

More recently there has been the strange cases of Jaap Stam and Laurent Blanc. The jettisoning of the Holland centre-back, after he had made some mild criticisms of the manager in his autobiography – hardly as severe as those Ferguson would make of others in his own – was followed by the signing of Blanc, who graced France's defence splendidly in his day but was clearly well past his sell-by date. Well, clearly it seemed to everyone but Fergie.

Meanwhile, was the Scot up to his old mind games when so outrageously proclaiming his fears that the refereeing in the Bernabeu would favour Real Madrid during the quarter-final first leg of this season's Champions League? If he was, then it worked. Real should certainly have had a penalty when Wes Brown brought down Ronaldo, while Fabien Barthez should have been sent off when he crazily and superfluously handled the ball outside the penalty box. Both times Swedish referee Anders Frisk gave United the benefit of the doubt.

Come to that, why was Mickael Silvestre kept on for so long when plainly injured? Why was Roy Keane not substituted when so clearly ineffective in central midfield, pulled down by all those operations?

The 3-1 defeat should have been much heavier, though you could hardly blame Fergie for the flaccidity of David Beckham in Madrid, utterly outshone by the much more talented Luis Figo.

June 1985

STADIUM disasters dominated the pages of *World Soccer* 18 years ago.

The cover recorded the horrific events of May 11, 1985, when 56 spectators lost their lives after fire engulfed the main stand at Valley Parade, Bradford.

A crowd of 11,000 had been hoping to celebrate Bradford City's promotion to the Second Division. Instead, they were caught up in the worst stadium tragedy in Britain since January 2, 1971, when 66 people died during an Old Firm derby at Ibrox Park, Glasgow.

A dropped cigarette end or match would eventually be found to be the cause of the fire in Bradford's all-wooden stand. But in the aftermath of the disaster, Simon Inglis wrote: "The 53 men, women and children [the toll would later rise to 56] who died in the tragic fire were victims not only of the raging inferno which engulfed the main stand at Valley Parade, but also of the long-standing inadequacies which afflict dozens of senior British football clubs.

"Valley Parade should now be abandoned, and a new phoenix be made to rise from the ashes. Let 100 years of neglect in British football end, once and for all, with the Bradford tragedy."

The inquest into the fire was only just under way when 39 people died after a wall collapsed before the European Cup Final between Juventus and Liverpool in Brussels' Heysel stadium. The disaster happened too late to be recorded on the June 1985 cover, but it would have far-reaching consequences for European football, not least because it led to a five-year ban on English clubs in European competition.

"Words don't seem enough to express the emotions aroused," wrote Keir Radnedge. "If this were a major riot in Northern Ireland or a flashback to the Falklands War such violence and carnage would at least appear in context. But it was piteously incongruous at a football match."

The game, which Juventus won courtesy of a Michel Platini penalty, was recorded as a mere detail. "The football began one hour 28 minutes after the scheduled kick-off – for what it was worth, which, by comparison with the scenes behind the Heysel stadium, was very, very little."

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